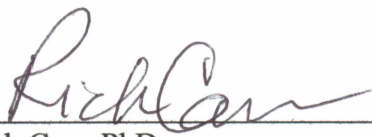



THE EVOLUTION OF THE PATIENT WOMAN: EXAMINING PATIENT GRISELDA AS
A SOURCE FOR WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE'S *THE WINTER'S TALE*

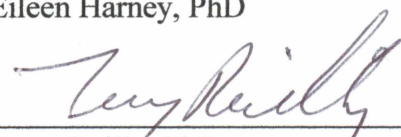
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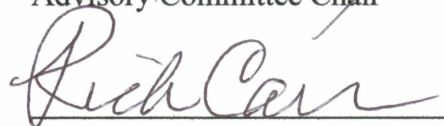
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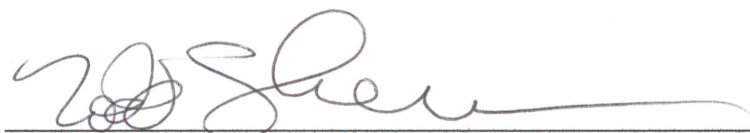

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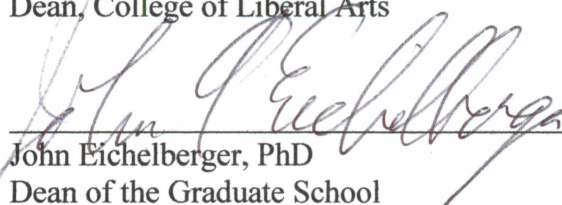

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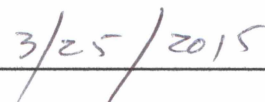

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THE EVOLUTION OF THE PATIENT WOMAN: EXAMINING PATIENT GRISELDA AS
A SOURCE FOR WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE'S *THE WINTER'S TALE*

A
THESIS

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By

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Abstract

English literary tradition contains a progression of the character Patient Griselda through narratives by Geoffrey Chaucer, John Phillips, and Thomas Dekker. Little critical attention has been paid to Patient Griselda stories, and much of the criticism contextualizes or dismisses Patient Griselda, rather than engaging in close reading of the character. Each successive storyteller produced and reproduced a slightly different Patient Griselda for their generation, however, and examining the evolution of Patient Griselda allows specific differences in the narratives to come to light. These key narrative differences suggest a strong argument for Thomas Dekker's *The Pleasant Comedy of Patient Grissil* as the most immediate Griselda source for Shakespeare's *The Winter's Tale*.

Scholars have largely ignored the Patient Griselda influences in *The Winter's Tale*. What little scholarship has been done on this topic attempts to connect Shakespeare's Griselda story elements to Chaucer. The similarities between Dekker's Griselda and Shakespeare's play, however, are too significant to ignore. Within *The Winter's Tale* are elements from Dekker's Griselda story which exist nowhere else in the English literary tradition of Patient Griselda. These elements include instances of the words "patient" and "patience," close parallels between characters, as well as similar narrative and plot structures.

For Maddie

Table of Contents

	Page
Signature Page	i
Abstract	v
Dedication	vii
Table of Contents	ix
Acknowledgements	xi
Introduction	1
The Evolution of the Patient Woman	3
Griselda and <i>The Winter's Tale</i>	27
Griselda after <i>The Winter's Tale</i>	59
Conclusion	61
Notes	63
Works Cited	65

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Introduction

The Griselda story as we read it today comes with eight hundred years of literary history. The first known version of the Griselda Story (in a recognizable written form) is Giovanni Boccaccio's "Tenth Day, Tenth Tale" from *The Decameron* (1348-1353), which is followed by Francis Petrarch's Latin translation of Boccaccio's tale, *Historia Griseldis* (1373) and Geoffrey Chaucer's English adaptation in *The Canterbury Tales* (1372), "The Clerk's Tale." In France shortly after these versions, Christine de Pizan included "About Griselda, the Marchioness of Saluzzo, a Woman of Unfailing Virtue" in *The Book of the City of Ladies* (1405). In sixteenth century England, John Phillips wrote a morality play adaptation of the Griselda story entitled *The Comedy of Patient and Meek Grissill*, followed by the end of the century Elizabethan play written by Thomas Dekker, Henry Chettle and William Haughton, titled *The Pleasant Comedy of Patient Grissil*.

Critical commentary on these texts has been limited, although other stories in *The Decameron*, *The Canterbury Tales*, and *The Book of the City of Ladies* have been extensively analyzed. Boccaccio's Griselda story has been primarily analyzed in terms of Gualtieri's behavior and the symbolism of Griselda's smock. Much of the criticism on Petrarch's and Chaucer's Griselda stories examines the relationship between their versions of the tale and the Boccaccio text (Finlayson 255-56). The criticism examines changes in the handling of the separation of mother and children as well as religious overtones and ambiguity of purpose in retellings of the Griselda story. Renaissance and Early Modern scholars tend to touch on, but not explore, the Griselda story. Much of the so-called criticism on the Phillips and Dekker texts falls into the category of textual explication, and the two are frequently dismissed as lesser works. Notably, Viviana Comensoli examines the changes in family structure taking place during the

transition between Elizabethan and Jacobean England and notes how those and other social changes are reflected in Dekker's text.

The first part of this thesis seeks to examine not only the history of the Griselda story more fully, but specifically the Dekker, Chettle, and Haughton version of the Griselda story. In the second part I argue that, based on the substantive changes and additions Dekker made to the original Griselda story, *The Pleasant Comodie of Patient Grissil* is the most immediate source for features of the Griselda story that appear in William Shakespeare's *The Winter's Tale*.

Characters who appear only in Dekker's version of the Griselda story form the templates for some of Shakespeare's characters. By drawing connections between parallel passages, similar characters and instances of the word "patient" in the text of *The Winter's Tale*, I seek to demonstrate that rather than Shakespeare is garnering his Griselda influences via "The Clerk's Tale," as Anna Baldwin argues (200), or via Chaucer's influences on Robert Greene's *Pandosto* as argued by Thomas H. McNeal (453), the elements of the Griselda story that Shakespeare used came most immediately from Dekker's retelling of the Griselda story.

The Evolution of the Patient Woman

Before Shakespeare ever dreamed of putting quill to paper to write *The Winter's Tale*, the Patient Griselda Story was more than two hundred years old. The Patient Griselda story appeared in its first complete, recognizable written form in Italy between 1348 and 1353, in Giovanni Boccaccio's *The Decameron* (Chettle et. Al v). Boccaccio's series of short tales is encased by a frame narrative, in which seven young women and three young men flee the plague in Florence. They pass their evenings by telling tales to one another, including a Griselda story. The following synopsis of the Patient Griselda Story in *The Decameron* is from the Mark Musa and Peter E. Bonadella translation.

Gualtieri¹, Marquise of Saluzzo, enjoys nothing but hawking and hunting, with no thought of marrying or having children. This does not please his vassals, so one day they offer to find Gualtieri a wife (*Decameron* 399). Gualtieri dislikes this idea; however, he agrees to marry to please his vassals on the condition that he choose the woman. Gualtieri threatens dire reprisals if his vassals disrespect the woman he marries. The vassals agree to this arrangement (400).

Shortly thereafter, Gualtieri tells his vassals that he has chosen a peasant woman to be his wife. He has seen her from afar many times, and has been "pleased with her manners." He orders his vassals to prepare for the wedding, and on the day of the wedding, Gualtieri rides his horse to Griselda's house, followed by the entire wedding party. Gualtieri asks Griselda and her father, Giannucolo, if Griselda would like to marry him, on the condition that Griselda will always be compliant, always try to please him, and never become angry over anything he says or does. Griselda agrees, and Gualtieri takes her outside, has her stripped and redressed in the finery made for her, and marries her on the spot (401).

Griselda excels at court and is well-loved by everyone (400-401). Eventually, Griselda gives birth to a daughter, which pleases Gualtieri. Shortly after the birth, however, Gualtieri decides to test his wife's patience with a long trial. He tells Griselda that he and his vassals are angry about her low birth. Griselda replies that she is not worthy of the honor of being Gualtieri's wife, and she is happy to do whatever he wishes. Gualtieri is pleased by this reply. Shortly thereafter, he informs one of Griselda's servants that he has to (on the word of his vassals) take the baby away, implying that the infant will be killed. The servant takes the baby from Griselda. Griselda tells the servant to obey Gualtieri, asking only that the body be buried, unless Gualtieri has ordered otherwise. The servant tells Gualtieri what Griselda had said, then takes the baby away to live with one of Gualtieri's relatives (402).

Shortly thereafter, Griselda becomes pregnant a second time and gives birth to a boy (402). Gualtieri is pleased. Then he tells Griselda that his vassals have an issue with the heir being the grandson of a peasant, and that he will eventually have to put Griselda aside and take another wife. Griselda replies that "nothing made her happier than to see him happy" (402). A few days later, Gualtieri has Griselda's son taken away, pretending the baby is going to be killed. Griselda again asks that the body be buried. Gualtieri is amazed at Griselda's stoicism and her obedience.

Rumors that Gualtieri has supposedly murdered his own children causes his vassals to spread cruel rumors. Gualtieri responds by telling his vassals that he is annulling his marriage with Griselda, producing a forged papal dispensation. When he finally tells Griselda he is dissolving the marriage, he tells her she is going home with the dowry she brought with her—the clothes on her back (403). Griselda's response is that she will take nothing from him, for he "received [her] naked" (404). She does ask for a single shift in addition to her dowry, to cover

her shame and in exchange for her virginity, which she cannot take home with her. Gualiteri, nearly in tears, grants her the shift. The vassals beg him to give Griselda a dress, but he does not (404). This may seem like an insignificant detail; however, its importance will become evident during our discussion of Shakespeare's *The Winter's Tale*.

Giannucolo, Griselda's father, has kept her old clothing (not expecting Gualtieri to keep her), and she puts them on and goes back to her old chores (404).

Years later, when Gualtieri announces that his new wife is on the way, he orders Griselda to make preparations for the new wife and to attend her on her wedding day (404). Griselda does so without complaint. In reality, the new wife is actually Griselda and Gualtieri's daughter, brought home with her brother. When Gualtieri asks Griselda what she thinks of his new bride, Griselda says that the girl seems very beautiful, but cautions Gualtieri to be nicer to the new girl than he was to Griselda, because Griselda does not think the new wife can bear the hardship.

Once he hears this, Gualtieri tells Griselda that he only did what he did to her because he wanted to teach her how to be a wife and show his vassals how to find a worthy wife. Then he reveals her children to her and asks Griselda to come back and be his wife again. Griselda weeps with joy to be reunited with her children, and is taken into another room to dress in finery (405-407).

Boccaccio, through the character of Dioneo—one of the youths telling the stories within the frame story of *The Decameron*—ends the story sardonically, with, “It might have served Gualtieri right if he had run into the kind of woman who, once driven out of her home in nothing but a shift, would have allowed another man to shake her up to the point of getting herself a nice-looking dress out of the affair” (Boccaccio 407). By having the character of Dioneo relate his

Griselda story, Boccaccio sets up an interesting relationship between the tale and the teller, a relationship that adds to the tension in the history of the Griselda story regarding its purpose.

The character of Dioneo is a transgressive one. Of the seven narrators, Dioneo is the only character permitted to break from the narrative theme of a given day, and tell stories which “most please him” (“Dioneo”). Dioneo is the exception to the rule, allowing him to break the narrative pattern while simultaneously reinforcing it. Many of Dioneo’s tales are also anarchic; his stories focus on characters who subvert their roles, such as sinning monks, adulterous wives and cheating traders. The two exceptions to Dioneo’s pattern are his song at the end of the fifth day, and the Griselda story (“Dioneo”). The Griselda story can be interpreted in several ways, from a moral tale for women and guide to moral behavior, to a scathing indictment of Gualtieri. By putting such an ambiguous tale in the mouth of a clearly subversive character, Boccaccio critiques the relationship between the sincerity of the tale and the reliability of the narrator. By introducing suspicion into the relationship between tale and speaker, Boccaccio creates the basis for ambiguity of purpose.

Boccaccio’s Griselda story is the basis for many of the versions of the tale that would follow, and the bones of this tale would remain bafflingly popular into the late 1800s. The crucial pieces of the narrative are all present in the various iterations of the tale; however, the details and explicitness of these crucial elements mutate slightly based on the form the future tales take. The various iterations of the Griselda story also reflect the values of the time periods in which the tale was rewritten.

Prior to the writing of *The Decameron*, the Patient Griselda folklore existed primarily in oral form, and Boccaccio was the first author to inscribe it. Francis Petrarch, however, read Boccaccio’s Griselda story, which was written in Italian, and translated it into Latin, allowing the

story to be more widely translated and spread (Phillips 25). The *Historia Griseldis* was written in 1373, and was in essence, a translation of Boccaccio; the story was not changed in any significant manner.

Almost simultaneous with Petrarch's *Historia Griseldis* was the publication of Geoffrey Chaucer's *The Canterbury Tales*, which included "The Clerk's Tale" in 1372 (editions were also printed in 1478 and 1483). In literary criticism and history, there exists a debate about Chaucer's most immediate source for his Griselda story: was Petrarch the sole source, or was Chaucer aware of Boccaccio? Several elements support Petrarch as Chaucer's most immediate source, the two most compelling being the visit Chaucer paid to Petrarch in Padua—although that date is difficult to pin down (Chettle et al. v-vi)—and Chaucer's Clerk's admission that he heard his tale from "Fraunceys Petrark" in "Padowe" (Chaucer 25-31). For a number of years, that was enough to allow critics to gloss over the striking similarities between Chaucer's tale and Boccaccio's, but John Finlayson maps out the instances of similarity in Chaucer and Boccaccio as well as the differences with Petrarch, concluding that Chaucer was aware of *The Decameron* (274).

Chaucer's massive framed narrative recounts the tales told by a group of pilgrims on their way to Canterbury, and the Griselda Story is recounted by the clerk, who says he was told the story by "Fraunceys Petrark, the laureate poete" (Chaucer 31). Stylistically, Chaucer's Griselda Story is similar to Boccaccio's in that Griselda's is simply one story among many in a larger framed narrative. The basic plot of Chaucer's Griselda Story also closely resembles Boccaccio's Griselda story, albeit with a much greater emphasis on religion. When the sergeant in "The Clerk's Tale" is sent to take Griselda's daughter from her, Griselda makes a point of blessing and crossing the child, saying,

Far weel, my child; I shal thee nevere see.
But, sith I thee have marked with the croys

Of thilke Fader, blessed mote he be,
That for us deyde upon a croys of tree,
Thy soule, litel child, I him bitake,
For this night shaltow dyen for my sake.
(Chaucer 555-560)

Boccaccio's Griselda appeals to no deity for her child's sake, and certainly does not go so far as to compare her daughter to Christ. Also, when Griselda's son is taken from her later in the narrative, the same comparison is not made; rather, Chaucer returns to Boccaccio's words. Boccaccio's Griselda begs the sergeant to bury her children's bodies, to prevent their being ravaged by animals, unless Gualtieri (Walter in Chaucer) has specifically ordered the bodies to go unburied (Boccaccio 402). When Chaucer's sergeant comes to take Griselda's son from her, she asks that her son be buried (680-684).

Finally, when Chaucer reunites the first family of Saluzzo, he heavily invokes a divine hand. First, Walter's declaration that Griselda is his wife is sworn to "by God that for us deyde" (Chaucer 1062). Second, when Griselda is reunited with her children, she thanks God for saving her children (Chaucer 1088-89). Boccaccio placed all the credit of the "wife testing" on Gualtieri's shoulders; the test itself was his idea, and the reunion is brought about by his orchestration. Chaucer's "The Clerk's Tale" places much of the credit for the safety of the children and the eventual reunion in God's hands; only the initial urge to test his wife is credited purely to Walter. Beyond those changes, however, Chaucer's version of Patient Griselda is similar to Boccaccio's.

Both Boccaccio and Chaucer leave the wider implications of Griselda's moral stance vague, with Chaucer's Clerk asserting that,

This storie is seyed, nat for that wyves sholde
Folwen Grisilde as in humilitee,
For it were importable, though they woulde;

But for that every wight in his degree
Sholde be constant in adversitee
As was Grisilde.
(Chaucer 1142-1147)

In Chaucer's view, therefore, Griselda is not meant to be taken as an example for women on good wifely conduct, but rather as a morality lesson about constancy in adversity. This point is actually a departure from Petrarch, who directs his audience to take Griselda as an example for all women (Finlayson 270).

The next iteration of the Griselda Story is found in France in 1405, when Christine de Pizan included a chapter "About Griselda, the Marchioness of Saluzzo, a woman of unfailing virtue" in *The Book of the City of Ladies* (156). *The Book of the City of Ladies* is de Pizan's response to the rampant misogyny in French society at the time. The narrative is an allegorical tale in which three virtues—Reason, Rectitude, and Justice—assist de Pizan in building a city for women based on tales of female saints, scholars, prophetesses, and warriors (5-9). To include Griselda in such a lineup in the defense of women might seem counterintuitive, as the tale is easily read as misogynistic in the extreme. De Pizan's retelling of the Griselda Story, however, leaves out a crucial aspect of Walter and Griselda's marriage: the prenuptial agreement of obedience. Both Chaucer and Boccaccio's Griselda stories have Walter extract an oath from Griselda before marriage:

And he asked her, if he were to marry her, would she always try to please him, and would she never become angry over anything he said or did and if she would always be obedient and many other similar questions—to all of these she replied she would.
(Boccaccio 401)

But thise demandes axe I first, quod he,
That sith it shal be doon in hastif wyse,
Wol ye assente, or elles yow avyse?

I seye this, be ye redy with good herte
To al my lust, and that I frely may,
As me best thinketh, do yow laughe or smerte,
And never ye to grucche it, night ne day?
And eek whan I sey 'ye', ne sey nat 'nay',
Neither by word ne frowning countenance?
Swere this, and here I swere our alliance."
(Chaucer 348-357)

There is no similar scene in de Pizan's retelling of the story; Walter marries Griselda without any prearranged agreement of obedience on Griselda's part. In all likelihood, this variation from Chaucer and Boccaccio functioned to further serve de Pizan's defense of women; if Griselda simply is loyal to Walter without a prenuptial agreement, she becomes a greater paragon for Walter to be astonished by at the end of the narrative.

The next version of the Griselda story is John Phillips's adaptation, which was entered in the Stationer's register twice; once in July 1565 and again in July 1568 (Wright 424). Phillips adapts the Griselda story for the stage in the style of a medieval morality play titled *The Play of Patient Grissell*. This departure in form for the Griselda story, from smaller narrative within a frame story to independent stage narrative, leads to significant changes from the Boccaccio version.

Structurally, the narrative framing differs from Boccaccio because the form is significantly different. As a morality play, *The Play of Patient Grissell* begins with a preface, and then a soliloquy by Politick Persuasion, before the tale itself begins; at the end there is an epilogue. This structure is a staple of Elizabethan theatre, despite Phillips writing his *Patient Grissell* late in the lifetime of morality plays (Comensoli 199), and some thirty years prior to the popularization of the domestic conduct books of the 1590s.

By placing the Griselda story in the framework of a morality play, Phillips cemented what both Chaucer and Boccaccio left ambiguous: Griselda as a model for the virtuous European woman. Griselda's symbolic nature is not the only major character change; Walter is given a clearly defined vice, and that vice is given name, form and lines by Phillips, in the character of Politick Persuasion. Politick Persuasion orchestrates the entire plot; he is the driving force behind all of Walter's decisions in regards to Griselda. Within the first few minutes of the play, Politick says "Now, Politick Persuasion, show forth thy skill./ I will make him obstinate, stubborn and forward,/ If that I may achieve my purpose and my will" (Phillips 135-137). Walter's friends, Reason, Fidence and Sobriety, have just told Walter that they've heard the servants muttering about Walter's lack of an heir, and rather than allowing Walter to object to marriage himself, Politick Persuasion proves himself a vice figure and convinces Walter that marriage is not for him. Once Walter is married, Politick Persuasion orchestrates Griselda's trials. While the inclusion of the allegorical figure Politick Persuasion makes for a clear morality play, it also undermines the traditional narrative of the Griselda story. With Politick Persuasion onstage, Walter comes across to contemporary readers as passive and weak, with little to no real agency. In Boccaccio's work and the other versions of the Griselda story up through de Pizan, Walter's first choice is not to marry, but by saying that he will choose his own wife and later by testing her, he retains agency; he is a dynamic character. With Politick Persuasion possessing all of the agency in Phillips's play, Walter remains flat and static, lacking the ambiguity to his actions that make him interesting in the first place.

Louis B. Wright suggests a political agenda behind Phillips's play, one which explains to a certain degree the passivity of Walter. When Elizabeth I took the throne of England in 1558, she was a single woman, and her marriage was a critical issue at the time. Wright explicitly

states that he is not suggesting that Phillips was using the Griselda story allegorically, but he does draw a parallel between the many references to the importance of Walter's marriage and the situation with the Virgin Queen (426). Wright also notes that the common population was invested in Elizabeth's marrying an Englishman (426). In 1865, seven years after Elizabeth had taken the throne, she was still unmarried, and Phillips wrote his version of the Griselda story. At that point in English history, a passive Walter dominated by Politick Persuasion more closely mirrors Elizabeth's penchant for leading suitors on in order to secure political power or advantages. That is not to say that Politick Persuasion is meant to be an allegory for Elizabeth; rather, Phillips's arrangement of his characters reflects both the *vox populi* (voice of the people) clamoring for Elizabeth's marriage and the evidence that marriage was not for her.

Despite the heavy hand of Politick Persuasion dominating and driving the action of the play, the plot of the Griselda Story remains similar to the older versions. The changes seen in the Phillips version have, in some cases, been seen in prior versions of the story. Phillips has no version of the prenuptial agreement in his version of the story; de Pizan also omitted this scene, but for different reasons. Where de Pizan elevates Griselda by omitting the prenuptial agreement, Phillips is simply taking for granted Griselda's utter obedience to Walter. Given that Phillips is writing a morality play, the point of wifely obedience is not lost; it is simply assumed as an essential component of the allegorical "good wife."

Also different is that Phillips compresses the timeline of the birth of the babies and Griselda's dismissal significantly. Time obviously passes, but Phillips is not specific as to exactly how much time elapses between Griselda's pregnancies, and almost immediately upon the birth of her son, Griselda is cast out. This change is more than likely an effect of genre; having twelve years pass in a play was out of keeping with the Aristotelian idea of *mimesis*

praxeos, that is, art reflecting reality. Therefore, if one is going to have a two-hour play, the events of that play should realistically take place in two hours. Additionally, Aristotle's unities describe (specifically tragedy; however, the definition is also relevant in comedy) "an imitation of an action that is complete and whole and of a certain magnitude" (65). He goes on to describe what constitutes a beginning, middle, and end of a play, specifically describing a middle as "that which follows something as some other thing follows it" (Aristotle 65). Aristotle here describes continuous action that naturally leads to a conclusion of events. Readers will note that a gap in time from two to twelve years, as demonstrated in the Griselda stories previously discussed, does not fit the Aristotelian definition. Phillips does not specify the precise number of years between the birth of Grissill's daughter and their reunion, but if Walter is bringing her home under the guise of a bride, at least twelve to fourteen years must have passed. Many plays ignore or only loosely adhere to Aristotelian concepts, as will be seen in the later examination of *The Winter's Tale*, but compression of the Griselda Story timeline in this case occurs because Phillips was writing a play.

The last major departure from the traditions of the Griselda story is the cast. While Boccaccio, Chaucer, and de Pizan focus on the primary players (e.g. Gualtieri and Griselda) with the obligatory nurse or sergeant to allow the action of the plot to be carried out, Phillips has a total of twenty-seven characters in his play, although the notes suggest that eight actors total could manage it (Phillips 76). These characters are primarily Virtues and Vices, with Politick Persuasion stealing the show from Walter and Griselda. The rest are minor roles, with only a few lines.

Phillips's cast presents a large number of allegorically named characters. Walter and Grissell and one or two other characters are named, but the rest are allegorical figures,

unambiguous and unquestionable. The natural question to ask, then, is has Griselda become (at this point in literary history) an allegorical figure herself? When Boccaccio gave his Griselda story to Dioneo to tell, the transgressive nature of Dioneo's character opened up the possibility that the tale was meant to be a spoof on the "perfect wife" or "perfect mother" stereotype. That ambiguity continued to a certain extent through Chaucer and Petrarch's versions, but by the time Phillips wrote his Griselda play, the character had enough literary force behind it that he could (and arguably did) elevate Griselda to an allegorical figure and therefore a social norm. The ambiguity of purpose Boccaccio imbued in his Griselda story is absent in Phillips's version. Similarly, de Pizan's Griselda is placed within a frame narrative that elevates women to a near-allegorical standing, but de Pizan differs chiefly from Phillips in the assumed audience reaction; de Pizan attempts to rewrite social norms, whereas Phillips reinforces them. By elevating Griselda to an allegorical figure, Phillips both solidifies her position as an allegorical figure and simultaneously opens the character up to inversions and questions from other authors.

The Play of Patient Grissell is the most radical departure from Boccaccio yet, but it was not the only version of the Griselda story to be performed on the Elizabethan stage. The Stationer's Register shows *The Plaie of Patient Grissell* entered in March 26, 1599-1600 (Chettle et al. x). This important collaboration between Thomas Dekker, Henry Chettle, and William Haughton was performed in 1601, although it would not be printed until 1603, as *The Pleasant Comedy of Patient Grissil*.

It is important to note that while the Dekker Griselda is a comedy, it isn't necessarily a comedy in that it is topically funny; rather, it is a comedy in the sense of "a stage play of a light and amusing character, with a happy conclusion to its plot" (OED). It is difficult for readers or audiences to argue with the reunion of a family as anything but a happy ending; the action of

Dekker's play, however, is difficult to define as "light and amusing" at times, and the OED definition of "Comedy" focuses primarily on the Greek and Latin writers, with a secondary definition which refers to narrative poetry with an agreeable ending (OED). Returning to Aristotle helps to classify *The Pleasant Comedy of Patient Grissil* as a comedy, with his concept of the Ludicrous. The Ludicrous as Aristotle defines it is "[a] subdivision of the ugly...some defect or ugliness which is not painful or destructive" (Aristotle 59). Certainly one can argue that Walter's notion to test his wife qualifies as a defect or ugliness, although once again, the definition does not fit exactly.

Shakespeare, a contemporary of Dekker's, often has a similar problem in that his comedies do not precisely fit preexisting definitions; they are characterized by a number of criteria, which also suit Dekker's *Comedy of Patient Grissil*. Shakespeare's comedies are heavily influenced by Commedia dell'arte. Influences include the play's ending in a marriage, the plot driven by revenge or forgiveness, the presence of wit combat, and a zero sum economy (all exchanged wealth is eventually returned to its former owner); for example, all of the wealth Walter showers on Griselda at their marriage is taken from her, although she is allowed to keep a smock in exchange for her virginity, which she cannot reclaim (Chettle et al. 57). All of these Commedia dell'arte staples are applicable to Dekker. In fact, the Shakespearean criteria for comedy is arguably the most fitting definition applicable to Dekker's *Grissil*.

In specifying that his *Griselda* story is a comedy, Dekker distances himself from Boccaccio, Petrarch, Chaucer, de Pizan and Phillips. Boccaccio, Petrarch and Chaucer all left the genre of their *Griselda* stories ambiguous, but with a religious or semi-religious (moral) slant. Phillips declares his *Griselda* story a morality tale in the subtitle, which says, "Wherein is declared the good example of her [Grissill] patience towards her husband, and likewise the due

obedience of children toward their parents” (Phillips 74), which asserts the common moral ideas of the time. De Pizan subverts the moral purpose implied by Chancer and expanded on by Phillips; the Griselda de Pizan is introduced to use the moral idea of a good wife to undermine patriarchal behaviors. Dekker, rather than using the Griselda story to any particular point or purpose, is writing the early modern equivalent of a Romantic Comedy: a moneymaker which exists to entertain. To that end, Dekker made some significant changes to the cosmetics of the Griselda story and one change to the bones of the tale.

The major change to the story involves the children. In earlier versions of the Griselda story, anywhere from two (Phillips) to eight (Boccaccio) years pass between the births of the children. Dekker writes that Griselda has only a single pregnancy, and gives birth to twins (Chettle et al. 45). The change in the number of children and the number of years between the children’s births is likely a function of the shift from morality tale to comedy, as Phillips greatly truncated the amount of time between births to allow the tale to be told onstage, but still allowed for a number of years to pass between births. Rather than have two births and two separate, single instances of separating infants from their mother, Dekker twists the plot so that Walter takes the babies from Griselda twice. The first time, he instructs Furio (his attendant, analogous to the Sergeant in earlier versions) to take the children from Griselda while she sleeps. At the end of that scene, Griselda’s children are restored to her, and Walter instructs Griselda to take her children and return to her father’s house with them. Griselda and the children reach home safely, and Griselda’s father—Janiculo—is getting them all settled when Walter (in disguise) and Furio arrive with orders to take the children to some unspecified location (Chettle et al. 45, 49-65). There is some discontinuity in the text over what Griselda assumes the fate of her children to be. As Walter and Furio are taking the children from Janiculo’s house, Griselda’s response is “Why

should I grieve to lose my children? No, no; I ought rather rejoice, because they are borne to their father” (Chettle et al. 64). Once Walter reveals the identity of the children to Griselda; however, she asks “Are these my children I supposed slain?” (Chettle et al. 86). The text gives no earlier indication that Griselda has any reason to assume her children were killed, which suggests that Dekker had no need to telegraph the supposed intentions of Furio at the second removal of the children. The Griselda story at that time was so commonly known that the trope needed no explanation; the audience knew it already.

What would have been new for Dekker’s audience was the “Husband Test” scene, which Dekker added to the beginning of the play. In previous versions of the Griselda story, the opening scene consists of Walter hunting with his noblemen. Once Walter promises to marry, the scene changes to preparations for the wedding, then the prenuptial agreement scene. Dekker, rather than giving his audience a romantic scene in which Griselda promises to obey Walter, gives us a pre-wedding test for Griselda. Instead of immediately announcing his intent to marry, Walter orders Griselda to choose which man in his retinue is “properest” and declares that she shall marry whomever she names (Chettle et al. 12). This scene, while foreign to extant versions of the Griselda story, bears a striking resemblance to the challenge Portia’s suitors face in Shakespeare’s *The Merchant of Venice*. Portia’s deceased father stipulates in his will that Portia’s husband will be determined by his choice of three caskets. Nerissa—Portia’s maid—describes the challenge: “Therefore the lott’ry that he hath devised in these three chests of gold, silver and lead, whereof who chooses his meaning chooses you” (1.1.27-30). When he has Walter order a game of subterfuge over Griselda’s choice of husband, Dekker may be alluding to Shakespeare’s play.

This scene, which immediately follows Walter's men insisting he marry, is important, considering the historical context in which this play was written. John Phillips was writing his *Griselda* story earlier in Elizabeth I's reign, when England assumed their queen would marry and produce heirs. Dekker is writing at the very end of Elizabeth's reign; Elizabeth would not marry and would not produce heirs. That left the question of succession undecided, and the tension created by the undecided future monarch manifests itself in many ways. One way it manifested was in the plays of the time, with characters being very, very concerned about marrying and producing children. Walter's compatriots initially worry about Walter marrying at all, which is standard for a *Griselda* story adaptation, but adding the "Husband Test" scene with *Griselda* underscores the importance of marrying the right person and continuing a clear bloodline. Walter has to manufacture displeasure on the part of his vassals as a component of the tests he puts to *Griselda* in older versions, but the displeasure of the courtiers in Dekker's *Griselda* story at their lord marrying a commoner is real. Having an heir is important, but having the right person to continue the line has greater importance. Elizabeth was not going to produce an heir, and the contenders for the throne after Elizabeth's death included Lady Isabella, the Spanish Infanta, and James VI of Scotland (later King James I of England). The period of time in which nobody was sure who would ascend the throne was a tense one; Dekker's text reflects that tension.

Dekker also adds two new central characters to his *Griselda* story: Laureo, *Griselda*'s brother, and Babulo, Janiculo's servant and clown. This instance is the first of these characters appearing in any version of the *Griselda* story, and they reflect some of the stock characters that were commonly seen on the Elizabethan stage: characters drawn from Italian traditions.

Dekker (and to a lesser degree, Phillips), while writing his *Griselda* story, had to adapt a prose—or poetic in Chaucer's case—narrative into a stage play. Such a sentence is easy to say,

but executing the task is much trickier. Readers are far more likely to suspend disbelief for words on a page than audiences are for actors on a stage. Additionally, prose writers have much greater leeway with time and setting than do playwrights. The Griselda story presents some compelling problems in its timeline; Aristotle decreed that only events that take place in the time onstage should be staged, and the Griselda story covers at least a decade and a half. Not only does the timeline need to be compressed, but Dekker wrote a comedy, not a tragedy. Early versions of the Griselda story do not include characters which telegraph the genre of the story. By drawing on stock theatre characters, Dekker molds the Griselda story to most of the conventions of Elizabethan theatre without having to justify these new characters to the audience.

Commedia dell'arte began as an Italian form of traveling comedy sketch shows in the mid 1500s. They achieved great popularity, with their form of stylized comedy and "lazzis" (stylized gags individualized to each character) and pocketful of stock characters going on to influence playwrights from Shakespeare to Moliere (*Commedia* 3-4). It would appear that Dekker either had a background in Commedia dell'arte or was familiar with many of the features and concepts. Laureo, Griselda's brother, is a scholar returning home at the beginning of the play, and throughout the play he is the counterpoint to Griselda's patience. His is always the dissenting, angry, or cynical voice. Laureo most closely resembles Il Dottore from Commedia dell'arte, also known as the doctor or professor character. This character is always a know-it-all, and he is usually either consistently wrong or a bore (*Commedia* 16). Traditionally, Il Dottore wore a black semi-mask (covering only the nose and forehead), all black robes with padding underneath to make him appear fat, and a floppy hat (*Commedia* 6). Il Dottore traditionally works with Pantalone (the dirty old man stock character) to keep the young lovers separate. In Laureo's case, instead of keeping young lovers from being together, he is the voice attempting to

keep Walter and Griselda apart. First he is skeptical of Walter's declarations of Griselda's beauty, and once Walter asks Laureo for his permission to marry Griselda, Laureo says that their respective class differences are too much to overcome (Chettle et al. 13-15). When Walter arrives with Furio to take the babies from Griselda at Janiculo's home, Laureo is the first to suggest cursing Walter; Griselda persists in being happy that the children are going to their father (Chettle et al. 62). On being summoned along with Griselda and Janiculo to perform menial tasks at the palace to prepare for Walter's wedding to his "second" wife, Laureo confronts Walter, saying "I have cast down my burthen, not my load;/ The load of your gross wrongs lies here like lead" (Chettle et al. 82). Essentially, Laureo is the nay-sayer of the play, and as even he admits at the end, "Henceforth my pride shall fly on humbler wings" (Chettle et al. 87). In essence, Laureo fulfills the role of Il Dottore, with a few adjustments to serve the plot of the Griselda story.

Babulo—Janiculo's servant/clown figure—on the other hand, is a clear adaptation of the Arlecchino character, also known as the Harlequin. Both wear motley, and both are known for their clownish, often child-like behavior (*Commedia* 7). Babulo is a great fan of Griselda's; he supports her and protects her children when Walter and Furio appear to take them away. Babulo also acts as a comedic foil to Laureo. Their first interaction together highlights their *Commedia dell'Arte* roots:

Bab: Master Laureo, welcome home. How do the nine muses—Pride, Covetousness, Envy, Sloth, Wrath, Gluttony and Lechery? You, that are scholars, read how they do.

Lau: Muses? These, fool, are the seven deadly sins.

Bab: Are they? Mass, methinks it's better serving them than your nine muses, for they are stark beggars.

(Chettle et al. 9)

Laureo is just coming home from university, and rather than being amused by Babulo (as even Walter is), he condemns him as a fool. Babulo, of course, takes this encounter in stride, and

proceeds to rib Laureo about the age-old problem of university students: being completely broke. This interaction also sets up the first of many inversions of allegorical figures, including Griselda herself, eventually.

Aside from those changes to the bones of the Griselda story, the main plot of Dekker's Griselda story proceeds as expected. The other cosmetic changes to the story revolve around the subplot Dekker has woven into his play. The lead characters in the subplot are the Welsh Knight Sir Owen and Welsh Widow Gwenthyan, and starring alongside them is Julia, Walter's sister, who is determined to remain unwed. This subplot rests squarely on issues of unruly or "doubted" wives, which, while suggesting alternatives to the Griselda story, is not the immediate narrative complement to the traditional Griselda Story.

Sir Owen wants to marry Gwenthyan when the two are introduced, but his fellows ridicule him because he cannot read or write, and is a fop (Chettle et al. 23-24). Gwenthyan initially refuses Sir Owen's proposal, but stipulates that "[i]f her cousin Gwalter say, 'Gwenthyan, tage this Pritish knight' shall love hur diggon; but must have her good will, marg you that, Sir Owen" (Chettle et al. 24). Particularly among the upper class at this time, marriage was primarily about a good match, either financially or politically; love was not a factor in marriage. The fact that Gwenthyan stipulates affection as a term of her second marriage reflects not only a formidable will on her part, but also the space outside of society that widows occupied. They could own property and wealth in their own right, yet the socially acceptable choice for a widow was to remarry. Women outside the jurisdiction of a father or husband occupied a legal grey area, and Gwenthyan uses that to secure her own happiness in a relationship.

When we next see Sir Owen, he is married to Gwenthyan and is bemoaning his wife's behavior to Walter and Julia. Sir Owen complains that Gwenthyan is constantly publicly chiding him, scolding him, and making a fool out of him because she does not want to be made a fool of in the same way that Walter is making Griselda a fool (Chettle et al. 44). Then Owen asks Walter to teach him to tame Gwenthyan the same way Walter is taming Griselda, which sets up the closest approximation of a moral that Dekker includes in his play. Walter instructs Owen to cut three "wands," bundle them together and put them aside, and Walter does the same (Chettle et al. 45). In short, she is anything but patient. At the end of the play, during the revelation of Walter's plan, Walter and Owen both try to bend their bundles. Owen's wands all snap in half, while Walter's, having been bent immediately after being cut and so bent easily at the time, bend without breaking. Walter's explanation of this is that,

...Married men,
That long to tame their wives, must curb them in
Before they need a bridle; then they'll prove
All Grissils, full of patience, full of love:
Yet that old trial must be tempered so,
Lest, seeking to tame them, they master you.
(Chettle et al. 88)

Essentially, because Walter "tamed" Griselda early in their marriage, she changed easily. Gwenthyan, on the other hand, as an "experienced" widow, is already out of control and therefore will not be changed. And yet, Sir Owen and Gwenthyan come to happiness in their marriage by the end of the play as well, partly because the play is a comedy, but also because Gwenthyan is not stupid. She is well aware of what Walter is doing to Griselda, and she has no desire to be treated the same way by this new husband, who is essentially in Walter's pocket. To that end, Gwenthyan accuses Owen of planning to beat her when she catches him with the newly cut wands (Chettle et al. 46) and sets up a banquet that she allows to be completely devoured by

beggars (Chettle et al. 66-70). She demonstrates to Sir Owen that he has no control whatsoever over his wife's behavior. Gwenthyan's authority over Sir Owen is unusual for an Elizabethan comedy, but this power dynamic is not the most uncommon aspect of *Patient Grissil*.

Julia—Gwalter's sister—is an anomaly in the world of Early Modern English comedy, because at the end of the play, she is unmarried. In city comedies and Shakespearean comedies of the same period, young single women are always married off at the end of the play; examples include Shakespeare's Kate and Bianca, from *Taming of the Shrew*, and Moll in Thomas Middleton's *A Chaste Maid in Cheapside*. Even Shakespeare's late romance *The Winter's Tale* (which is classified as a comedy in the first folio) sees the unlikely marriage of Paulina and Camillo at the end of Act V, so all of the female characters onstage are either married or engaged to be married. Julia asserts throughout the entire play that she has no desire for love or marriage, and she remains unmarried despite Walter's authority as her brother to order her to marry. As with Gwenthyan, Julia exhibits a startling amount of power. Where Gwenthyan chooses to marry again and to marry a man that suits her, Julia is not forced into any kind of contrived marriage.

The characters of Julia and Gwenthyan provide different contexts through which to consider the Griselda story; that of a widow and subsequently remarried woman who refuses to be dominated by her husband, and that of a young woman who does not believe in the institution of marriage. Both Julia and Gwenthyan perform various reactions the audience may have had to Griselda's plight onstage, in effect becoming a meta-audience. Additionally, by having what might be the "offhand" reactions to Griselda integrated into the action of the play, Julia and Gwenthyan's opinions encourage readers and audience members to examine Griselda's situation more deeply.

In the transition from Elizabethan England to Jacobean England, the idea of a nuclear family was becoming increasingly inscribed in laws which sought to promote social stability; simultaneously, the idea of marrying for affection was coming into popularity if not overwhelming acceptance (Comensoli 202). Given those factors, Julia's remaining unwed becomes less a complete break with conventions of the comedic genre, and more of an authorial choice to comment on the changing views of family and marriage at the time.

These changing views also justify the juxtaposition of a seemingly subversive subplot (Julia's refusal of love and marriage; Owen and Gwenthyan's unconventional marriage) with what had for several hundred years been a folktale lauded for its portrayal of what constitutes a good wife (Comensoli 210). Comensoli argues that these two plotlines, so seemingly at odds with each other, reflect the social tension of the time (210); reconciling traditional views of marriage and love and family with new trends is never simple, and the Griselda story has been used as a vehicle to usher in changing views that conflict with traditional views a number of times in its history.

A focus on the context and specific usage of the epithet "Patient" in the previously discussed texts provides a good way to examine the ways the Griselda Story has been used in this fashion. Most authors refer to their Griselda as "Patient," but the meaning of "patient" is unstable, and not every author uses the epithet "Patient" in his/her Griselda story.

The OED defines patience as "The calm, uncomplaining endurance of pain, affliction, inconvenience, etc.; the capacity for such endurance," but what precisely is meant by "patience" changes over time. The earliest meaning of patience is from the thirteenth century, and that definition is "undergoing the action of another; passive; (also) achieved or acquired inwardly" (OED "patience"). That definition most closely fits the Boccaccio, Chaucer, and Petrarch

versions of the Griselda story, when most critics agree that the tale was meant to be a moral lesson (although precisely what moral is being taught to whom is debated, as previously noted). John Phillips wrote his Griselda story after the definition of “patient” that Boccaccio, Chaucer, and Petrarch used had gone out of common usage; to compensate, Phillips added “meek” to his Griselda’s title. The adjective form of “meek” means both “gentle, courteous, kind” and “humble, submissive” (OED “meek”), which when combined with the definition of “patient” that was used colloquially in Phillips’s era, takes his Griselda from merely passive to an example of a woman who endures all of the hardship to which her husband subjects her.

Christine de Pizan’s version of the Griselda story is decidedly different from that of Boccaccio, Chaucer, and Petrarch, and she chooses her terms differently: de Pizan’s Griselda is heralded as a woman of “unfailing virtue.” Virtue in this case is defined as “[a] moral quality regarded (esp. in religious contexts) as good or desirable in a person, such as patience, kindness, etc.; a particular form of moral excellence” (OED “virtue”), which carries religious connotations, but does not limit de Pizan’s Griselda to just being patient. De Pizan allows some looseness in her terminology, and allows the potential for her Griselda to embody more than just one virtue, which elevates Griselda morally even more than defining her as “patient.” Dekker and his collaborators name their Griselda “patient,” but as previously discussed, the events of their play and the subplot involving Owen, Gwenthyan, and Julia work to achieve a new version of Griselda and a new kind of patience.

To date, little commentary of the various iterations of the Griselda story exists. While plenty of critics have written about *The Decameron* and *The Canterbury Tales*, little attention has been paid specifically to the Griselda stories in those frame narratives, and less critical attention has been paid to Elizabethan stage versions of the Griselda story. What little analysis

has been performed on these versions, the Dekker Griselda in particular, has been relegated to textual explications, contextualizing the expectations of an Elizabethan audience, and damning the story for modern readers. A typical critical assessment of the Griselda story is that of Harry Keyishian, who asserts, “The Griselda story is a piece of sentimentalism at best, and affront to human dignity with pathological implications at worst” (Keyishian 261). Keyishian’s comment does a disservice both to the Elizabethan and modern audiences who still enjoy this tale. Such an assessment also fails to take into account the seven hundred and fifty years of literary history behind the Griselda story, a timeline which proves the inherent adaptability of the tale.

The significance of the two hundred and fifty years of literary history that the Griselda story had accumulated by 1610-11 and the inherent adaptability of the story are critical. As I will argue in the next chapter, Shakespeare’s *The Winter’s Tale* reproduces earlier versions of the Griselda story, and Dekker’s *The Pleasant Comedy of Patient Grissil* is the most immediate source for many features of the characters in Shakespeare’s play.

Griselda and *The Winter's Tale*

Despite the similarities between Hermione and Griselda², few critics have attempted to connect any version of the Griselda story with *The Winter's Tale*. The handful who have tried to connect the texts did so by way of Chaucer's connection to Robert Greene's *Pandosto*, rather than any direct connection between Shakespeare and a Griselda story³. This chapter will examine the sources used by Shakespeare for *The Winter's Tale*, and argue that while *Pandosto* is important, and while features of early versions of the Griselda story are significant, Thomas Dekker's *The Pleasant Comedy of Patient Grissil* is one of Shakespeare's most important and immediate sources.

By most immediate source, I refer to the work that is acknowledged as the direct source of plot or character influences used in another work. Other examples of most immediate sources include Shakespeare's use of the anonymous *King Leir* (1590) as the literary basis for *King Lear* (1605), and the *Ur-Hamlet* (Thomas Kyd, 1589) as the literary basis for *Hamlet*, the anonymous *History of King John* for Shakespeare's *King John*, and so on⁵.

Harold Bloom, in his essay on *The Winter's Tale*, wishes that tradition had not named *Cymbeline*, *Timon of Athens*, *The Tempest* and *The Winter's Tale* as romances (639). Helen Cooper notes that "It is generally only in fairytales, as distinct from romances, that the magic is forced on the hero... In romance the hero has the option of refusing the magic" (144), which, as we shall see, sheds an interesting light on the categorization and analysis of *The Winter's Tale*. While modern critics characterize *The Winter's Tale* as a romance, the play was listed as a comedy upon its publication in the First Folio (*The Riverside Shakespeare* 101). The comedic roots of the Patient Griselda story were discussed in the previous chapter, as well as a brief definition of comedy. *The Winter's Tale* is difficult to reconcile with "a stage play of light and

amusing character, with a happy conclusion to its plot” (OED comedy), given the weight of the accusations leveled at Hermione and Perdita, as well as the heinous acts committed by a mindlessly jealous Leontes. The element which may have caused critics to define *The Winter’s Tale* as a romance are the magical restoration of Hermione by Paulina (5.3.80-109), and the concluding marriages of Florizel and Perdita, and Paulina and Camillo.

It is well established that Shakespeare primarily produced and reproduced older tales and stories in order to develop the plots and characters of his plays; one might even accuse Shakespeare of plagiarism.

Shakespearean plays categorized as romances were grouped this way because each play shares a supernatural or magical element; whether we can accurately call *The Winter’s Tale* a romance or a fairy tale (based on Cooper’s assertion of agency with magic), the First Folio calls it a comedy, and indeed the play comes to a happier conclusion than that of Shakespeare’s main source: *Pandosto*. According to *The Riverside Shakespeare*, the primary source for *The Winter’s Tale* is Robert Greene’s 1588 text *Pandosto, the Triumph of Time* (87).

Pandosto opens by introducing the King of Bohemia, Pandosto, his wife Bellaria and their son Garinter. Egistus, King of Sicilia and childhood friend of Pandosto, sails to visit the Bohemian royal family. The Sicilians are treated exceedingly well, and Egistus and Bellaria are constant companions during Egistus’s visit (Greene 1-5). As the visit progresses, Pandosto grows increasingly jealous of Bellaria and Egistus; eventually Pandosto resolves to poison his old friend. Pandosto’s cupbearer—Franion— informs Egistus of the plan and smuggles Egistus and himself out of Bohemia (Greene 5-14). Pandosto then isolates Garinter from his mother, imprisoning Bellaria. Bellaria is accused of adultery with Egistus. Eventually, he is proclaimed innocent by the Oracle of Delphi, and dies upon hearing of the death of Garinter. Meanwhile,

Bellaria's daughter—Fawnia—who has been cast adrift by Pandosto, washes up on the shores of Sicilia and is found and taken in by a shepherd (Greene 15-38).

Egistus has a son, Dorastus, and once Dorastus and Fawnia are grown, the two meet and begin a clandestine courtship. This courtship concludes in a handfasting, after which the two lovers escape Egistus's displeasure and flee to Bohemia (*Pandosto* 39-71). Fawnia is shortly after revealed to be Pandosto's daughter, she and Dorastus are properly married, and Pandosto commits suicide, after which Dorastus and Fawnia happily rule Bohemia (*Pandosto* 72-85).

A brief plot summary of *Pandosto* is then nearly an exact match for the synopsis of *The Winter's Tale*. Significantly, the main structural change between *Pandosto* and *The Winter's Tale* is the family reunion at the end. Perdita and Leontes's reunion with Hermione more closely resembles the end of any given Griselda story than does *Pandosto*. Anna Baldwin and Thomas H. McNeal both tie Chaucer's "The Clerk's Tale" to *The Winter's Tale*, which acknowledges Shakespeare's connection with Chaucer. McNeal argues that Greene has "taken the one set of characters offered in 'The Clerk's Tale' and used them twice in his own story" (455). Greene's story is of course *Pandosto*. McNeal argues that Shakespeare's Griselda influences come through Greene, but Baldwin argues that "[t]here is however one important aspect of *The Winter's Tale* which Shakespeare could not have found in any of the Grissel stories apart from Chaucer's... Chaucer's Griseldis however is both triumphant and suffering" (209). This characterization of Griselda is vague, and as we shall see, while Griselda is a complex character in general, Dekker's Grissil in particular is multi-layered. Shakespeare, however, had more sources than simply Greene and Chaucer.

While *Pandosto* may serve as the main source for *The Winter's Tale*, *The Riverside Shakespeare* and E.A.J. Honigmann acknowledge Francis Sabie's 1555 texts *The Fisherman's*

Tale and *Flora's Fortune* as sources for particular details within *The Winter's Tale*. Honigmann draws parallels between Sabie and Shakespeare which include the titles of the works (How *The Winter's Tale* is reminiscent of *The Fisherman's Tale*), the number of messengers sent to Apollo and the order of events from raising the question of consulting the oracle to abandoning the infant (Honigmann 28-29). Additionally, Honigmann lays out parallel passages between Shakespeare and Sabie which are absent in Greene. Three "common" parallel passages cited are

- (i) The conceit that one could live only to gaze at Flora (Perdita):
 Good lord, how long could I haue found in heart,
 T'aue gazed on her mind-reioyeing shape.
 Whole days, whole years, my life I could haue spent
 In viewing her. (1 F.T., sig. C3v)

 I should leave grazing, were I of your flock,
 And only live by gazing. (W.T., IV, iii, 109-10)
- (ii) The comparison of Flora's (Perdita's) neglect of her duties and her foster mother's more active nature:
 My mother oft hath told me in a rage,
 That I liue like a Lady vnto her,
 I (saith she) care for all things which be done,
 I seme the Swine, I giue the T'ulhens meat:
 I fret, I chide, I neuer am at rest,
 And thou doest nought but walke the pleasant fieldes . . .
 (1 F.T., sig. 1D2v)

 Fie. daughter! when my old wife lived, upon
 This day she was both pantler, butler, cook;
 Both dame and sonant; welcomed all, serv'd all, . . .
 . . . her face o' fire with labour and the thing she took to quench it,
 She would to each one sip. You are retir'd,
 As if you wore a feasted one and not
 The hostess of the meeting . . . (W.T., IV, iii, 55 64)
- (iii) The cliché of the turtle lamenting its mate:
 And as a Turtle Doue, when she hath lost
 Ilor louing mate, so seem'd ho to lament . . . (2 F.T., sig. C3v)

 I, an old turtle,
 Will wing mo to some withered bough, and there

My mate, that's never to be found again,
Lament till I am lost. (W. T., V, iii, 132-5)
(Honigmann 30)

Each of these passages fails to have a corresponding passage in Greene, supporting Sabie as a source for *The Winter's Tale*. Honigmann also draws from an 1884 anonymously published book, *A New Study of Shakespeare: An Inquiry into the Connection of the Plays and Poems, With the Origins of the Classical Drama, and with the Platonic Philosophy; through the Mysteries* (eventually claimed by W.F.C. Wigston in 1888), which suggests a parallel between Ceres and Proserpine and Hermione and Perdita (33-34). While Honigmann is correct that no reader will deny the connection between Perdita and spring (and therefore Proserpine), tying *The Winter's Tale* to specific tales in *Metamorphoses* becomes problematic very quickly, particularly when comparing connections between "Pygmalion" and Act V of *The Winter's Tale*.

We know Shakespeare was familiar with Ovid's *Metamorphoses*; the text is cited as a source for various Sonnets, *Venus and Adonis*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, and *Troilus and Cressida* (*The Riverside Shakespeare* 889-923). Therefore, having "Pygmalion," "Orpheus and Eurydice," and "The Rape of Proserpine" to draw on would lead to some crossover. Connecting Perdita to Proserpine, however, fails to stand up to scrutiny. While both Perdita and Proserpine are associated with spring, Florizel is no Pluto. Additionally, the separation of mother and daughter in "The Rape of Proserpine" and *The Winter's Tale* are significantly different and come to significantly different results. For Proserpine, the separation from Ceres becomes cyclical, and is due (in part) to a conscious act of Proserpine's (Ovid 115). Additionally, Proserpine's initial abduction is an act of violence. Perdita, on the other hand, is willingly relinquished by Hermione to Paulina, in the hope that Leontes's heart would soften upon seeing his child (2.1.27-39). At the close of the play, once Perdita is reunited with

Hermione, the reunion is permanent; Ceres and Proserpine reunite every spring and so represent Spring but Hermione and Perdita's reunion is less an allegory for seasonal change and renewal than it is a permanent reconnection.

As for the parallels with "Pygmalion," critics often cite the statue scene (Strain 575). This comparison, while visually powerful, is more complex than mere physical scrutiny. Pygmalion's initial aim was to create the perfect woman, and he required divine intervention in order for his statue to come to life (Ovid 232-234). While both Hermione and Paulina argue at various points in *The Winter's Tale* that Hermione was an excellent wife and mother, the emphasis is on Hermione's constancy, loyalty, and chastity, not her physical perfection (3.2.22-53). Pygmalion's desire for his statue, aside from perfection, is also to create a new relationship. Paulina and Leontes, by resurrecting and accepting Hermione, are restoring shattered relationships: husband and wife, parents and child, as well as that of ruling family and kingdom. Noticeably lacking is the unequal relationship between experienced creator and innocent creation that resonates at the end of "Pygmalion." Leontes and Hermione, while not necessarily equal within their relationship, certainly do not embody the lopsided relationship of Pygmalion and his statue; if any relationship is unequal, it is Paulina and Leontes's relationship at the end of the play. Overall, while it is clear that Ovid was influential to Shakespeare during the writing of *The Winter's Tale*, it is equally clear that *Metamorphoses* is a minor, rather than a major source.

In our discussion of the various English iterations of the Griselda story in the previous chapter, I made clear that while the Griselda story changed little in prose, adapting the story for the stage led to significant alterations. Most critics look to Chaucer for the Griselda source in Shakespeare, if they look for a Griselda source at all. Most commonly cited as the Griselda story source that influenced Shakespeare is Chaucer's "The Clerk's Tale." If we accept Chaucer as

Shakespeare's most immediate Griselda source, then the influence of the stage versions of the Griselda story—Dekker and Phillips's Griselda stories—are ignored in Shakespeare. By attributing "The Clerk's Tale" as a source for *Pandosto*, the Griselda story is removed as a direct source for *The Winter's Tale*. *The Riverside Shakespeare*'s "Chronology and Sources" section demonstrates that Shakespeare was certainly familiar with both *The Decameron* and *The Canterbury Tales*—specific tales from each text are cited as sources. "Day 2, Tale 9" is cited as a source for *Cymbeline*. "The Miller's Tale" is cited as a source for *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, and "The Knight's Tale" is a source for both *Midsummer* and *Two Noble Kinsmen* (*The Riverside Shakespeare* 81-82, 86).

Another important source for Shakespeare was Thomas Dekker. Dekker wrote a stage version of *Troilus and Cressida* (a play extant today only in fragments), which is cited as a source for Shakespeare's *Troilus and Cressida* (*The Riverside Shakespeare* 84). Such inspiration in Elizabethan and Stuart playwrights was reciprocal; Dekker's Griselda clearly had *Taming of the Shrew* influences (Chettle et. Al. xi), and Gwalter's line "I'll gild that poverty, and make it shine/ With beams of dignity" (Chettle et. Al. 14) mirrors the King of France's response to Bertram in *All's Well that Ends Well*, "If thou canst love this creature as a maid,/ I can create the rest. Virtue and she/ Is her own dower; honor and wealth from me" (2.3. 142-144). Given that Shakespeare was familiar with older prose versions of the Griselda story, it is not surprising that critics have connected the more well-known Chaucer version of the Griselda story to *The Winter's Tale* rather than the more closely aligned (but far less well known) Dekker stage play.

The two significant critical texts connecting *The Winter's Tale* to "The Clerk's Tale" are Anna Baldwin's 1990 essay "From 'The Clerk's Tale' to *The Winter's Tale*", and Thomas H. McNeal's 1932 article "'The Clerk's Tale' as a Possible Source for *Pandosto*." Both scholars

argue for a Griselda story connection to *The Winter's Tale*; however, both focus on a connection to Chaucer through Greene's *Pandosto*. Suggesting that Shakespeare's reworking of the Griselda story comes from Greene ultimately weakens the connection between "The Clerk's Tale" and *The Winter's Tale*.

Baldwin's essay purports first to trace the history of the Griselda story, and then to see whether or not Greene and Shakespeare were influenced by any version of the Griselda story (199). Her methodology is flawed in several aspects: First, she asserts that Boccaccio's Griselda story bears little resemblance to any other English Griselda story because it was not translated until 1620 (199). During our discussion of the progression of the Griselda story through its English roots, we established that Petrarch's translation of Boccaccio's Griselda story from Italian to Latin caused the tale to become more widely known, and may have influenced Chaucer's Griselda story. Second, rather than tracing primarily the English line of the Griselda story—which would have been most easily accessible for Shakespeare, and truest to the Boccaccio Griselda—she traces the French line of the Griselda story concurrently with the English line (while also failing to acknowledge Christine de Pizan's Griselda tale, which was discussed in the previous chapter).

While Baldwin acknowledges that the parallels between Dekker's *Patient Grissil* and *The Winter's Tale* are striking (208), she discards the textual and character similarities of the two works over a single difference: stoicism. Baldwin notes that the sixteenth-century Griseldas maintain a tradition of dry-eyed composure, and never express the betrayal Hermione does when she admits that Leontes's love for her is gone and she knows not why (209). Baldwin's explanation for this departure from the sixteenth century tradition is to attribute the less complaisant Griselda to Chaucer, specifically citing

Oh good god: howe gentill and howe kynde
Ye seemed by your speech and your visage
The day that marked was our maryage;...
Love is not olde as whan it is new.
(852-7)

In direct comparison to Hermione's final moment of loss in the courtroom:

The crown and comfort of my life, your favour,
I do give lost, for I do feel it gone,
But know not how it went.
(3,2,94-6)

According to Baldwin, these passages represent Griselda figures, both of whom are “triumphant and suffering” (209). This characterization is problematic when these excerpts are taken with the rest of their respective speeches. Hermione has just been threatened with death by Leontes (3.2.82-90), and her response is, in essence, that she would prefer to die than to live (3.2.91-115). That is a clear white flag from Hermione; she is surrendering to the loss of her husband and her marriage despite having done nothing wrong, and this loss causes Hermione much suffering. While Baldwin fails to specify what Hermione's triumph is, she does say that Hermione's greatest trial is “the loss of this tyrant's love” (209). If Hermione's greatest trial is loss of love and she is fully prepared to die, then what stays her execution? Honor. Hermione has just finished enumerating for the court all the reasons she has not to live, and then she made this speech:

But yet hear this: mistake me not; no life,
I prize it not a straw, but for mine honour,
Which I would free, if I shall be condemn'd
Upon surmises, all proofs sleeping else
But what your jealousies awake, I tell you
'Tis rigor and not law. Your honours all,
I do refer me to the oracle:
Apollo be my judge!
(3.2.109-115)

Hermione appeals to a higher authority to rescue her honor, and moments after she is declared chaste, her son dies, and she succumbs upon hearing the news. Hermione's triumph, such as it is, is denied by Leontes in seconds, by his refusal to believe the oracle (3.2.). Chaucer's Grisilde's suffering is clear; Baldwin characterizes Grisilde's suffering as "...faithfulness, this continuing love for a man she recognizes, by his cruelty and fickleness, to be unworthy of her love" (209). What precisely these women share in triumph is not explained by Baldwin, but if triumph is the ability to be "aware of her own value" and to put that value into words aimed at the man who has wronged her, then Hermione *has no triumph*. In *The Winter's Tale*, the final declaration of Hermione's value comes in her first speech in the courtroom scene, when she appeals to Leontes as a wife to her husband:

You, my lord, best know,
Who least will seem to do so, my past life
Hath been as continent, as chaste, as true,
As I am now unhappy; which is more
Than history can pattern, though devised
And play'd to take spectators.
(3.2.32-37)

This speech acts as a code for the Griselda story, cuing audiences to see the parallels between the onstage action and the source material. After this speech, Hermione addresses only specific court charges, and then an enumeration of what she has lost before appealing to Apollo for judgment. Moments after judgment, Hermione "dies." Grisilde may be sent away after her cutting indictment of her husband, but speaking out against her husband effects change in Grisilde's life; she has both suffering and triumph. Hermione has her reunion at the end, but according to Baldwin's criteria, Hermione has no triumph.

Baldwin's example of the simultaneously triumphant and suffering Griselda as proof that "The Clerk's Tale" is the most important Griselda source ignores the striking similarity between

Hermione and Greene's Bellaria in their courtroom scenes. Baldwin does not discuss this parallel. Hermione has no desire to live, just to be remembered as an honorable woman. Greene's courtroom speech is eerily similar to that of Shakespeare's—or vice versa, since *Pandosto* predates *The Winter's Tale*—particularly when Bellaria appeals to Pandosto:

[B]ut Bellaria, whose life then hung in the balance, fearing more perpetual infamy than momentary death, told the king if his fury might stand for a law that it were vain to have the jury yield their verdict; and, therefore, she fell down upon her knees and desired the king that for the love he bare to his young son Garinter, whom she brought into the world, that he would grant her a request; which was this, that it would please his majesty to send six of his noblemen whom he best trusted to the Isle of Delphos, there to inquire of the oracle of Apollo whether she had committed adultery with Egistus, or conspired to poison him with Franion? and if the god Apollo, who by his divine essence knew all secrets, gave answer that she was guilty, she were content to suffer any torment were it never so terrible. The request was so reasonable that Pandosto could not for shame deny it.

(24-25)

Given the twin concerns for infamy over life, and the subsequent deaths of both Bellaria and Hermione, it seems reasonable that Hermione's speeches to Leontes come directly from *Pandosto*, rather than "The Clerk's Tale".

Thomas H. McNeal approaches the Griselda source in *The Winter's Tale* in a different manner, choosing to find influences from "The Clerk's Tale" in Greene's *Pandosto*; Shakespeare, therefore, would have derived his Griselda references second-hand. The main thrust of McNeal's argument states that Greene built both the plots in *Pandosto* "largely by turning the Chaucerian plot upside-down" (453).

While much commentary, including Baldwin's comparisons of "The Clerk's Tale" and *The Winter's Tale*, includes the analysis of parallel passages, McNeal suggests that a lack of parallel passages between "the Clerk's Tale" and *Pandosto* accounts for why the two texts have

not been previously linked (453). He then goes on to examine comparative selections from both texts; these selections lack phrasal echo, and are therefore not necessarily parallel passages, so he draws connections in “thought content” (455), not one-to-one phrases. Examples of these “thought content” similarities include passages announcing Bellaria and Grisilde’s first pregnancies, Pandosto setting his daughter adrift and the sergeant taking Grisilde’s child, as well as Dorastus first spying Fawnia and Walter first seeing Grisilde (456-459). While comparing Dorastus discovering Fawnia with Walter finding Grisilde may seem erroneous, McNeal’s inversion of character chart helps to clarify the comparison:

Part 1	
<i>The Clerk’s Tale</i>	<i>Pandosto</i>
Walter, young lord of Saluces	Pandosto, young king of Bohemia
Griselda, his lady, patient and suffering	Bellaria, his queen, patient and long-suffering
Their young son	Garinter, their young son
Their young daughter	Fawnia, their young daughter
A sergeant, whom Walter sends to take away Griselda’s babes	The guard, whom Pandosto sends to take away Bellaria’s babe
Part 2	
Walter, a young lord of Saluces, who falls in love with a peasant lass	Dorastus, a young prince of Sicilia, who falls in love with a peasant lass
Griselda, the shepherdess	Fawnia, the shepherdess
The ambassador from the citizens, who advises Walter to marry for state reasons	Polixenes, father to Dorastus, who advises his son to marry for state reasons
Janicula, the old shepherd, father to Griselda	Porrus, the old shepherd, foster-father to Fawnia
(McNeal 454)	

The characters listed for “The Clerk’s Tale” are in inverted plot order, while the *Pandosto* characters are in proper order for their text. Incidentally, this chart becomes more complicated when you add *The Winter’s Tale* to the mix. Certainly the royal families are accounted for, but Perdita’s foster-brother and Autolycus are unaccounted for, as is Paulina. Antigonus functions as the ambassador from “The Clerk’s Tale” up to a point, but once he is eaten by the bear, the

ambassador is no longer a character in *The Winter's Tale*, and neither "The Clerk's Tale" nor *Pandosto* have an analogous character to Paulina. Greene may have been influenced by Chaucer, leading to some secondhand resemblance to "The Clerk's Tale" in *The Winter's Tale*, but "The Clerk's Tale" is two steps removed from *The Winter's Tale*, leaving space for a more immediate Griselda source. While it is possible that Greene was influenced by "The Clerk's Tale", *The Winter's Tale* is too dissimilar from Chaucer's Griselda story for the Griselda elements to come from anywhere but echoes of echoes in *Pandosto*. Elements of Dekker's *Patient Grissil* are unique in the literary history of the Griselda story, and yet it is these elements which appear in Shakespeare. Shakespeare's most immediate source must be Dekker's play.

Three elements form the basis for the argument of *The Pleasant Comedy of Patient Grissil* as the most immediate source for *The Winter's Tale*. These are (1) the similarities between characters, (2) instances of Shakespeare's use of the word "patient", and similar forms of the word, and (3) similar plot and story structures.

The most obvious character comparison to make between *Patient Grissil* and *The Winter's Tale* is that between Grissil and Hermione. Clearly, both represent the lead female role in their respective plays, and experience similar circumstances. Also worth noting is that Walter's testing of Grissil is an act, whereas Leontes's testing of Hermione is real. The less clear but equally valid comparison is that of Grissil and Perdita. McNeal argued that Greene took the characters of "The Clerk's Tale" and doubled and inverted them to fill the characters of *Pandosto* (455); Shakespeare has doubled and inverted Grissil in *The Winter's Tale*, giving us elements of her character not only in Hermione, but in Perdita.

By using elements of Grissil in both Hermione and Perdita, Shakespeare gives us clear examples of mutability and the Early Modern penchant for inverting stories. As I noted in

chapter one, the Griselda story's endurance has much to do with how easily the story is adapted and reproduced for successive generations. Shakespeare has adapted the Griselda story once again for *The Winter's Tale*, and in doing so inverted the plot of the Griselda story. Shakespeare gives audiences the second half of the Griselda story in the first half of *The Winter's Tale* through the character of Hermione, and the first half of the Griselda story in the second half of *The Winter's Tale* through the character of Perdita.

Both Hermione and Grissil are viewed as excellent wives as well as being respected in their own right as Queen and Marchioness. They bear children, and both are shortly bereft of their children, with their husbands willfully foreshortening their own family lines out of either jealousy or in keeping with a plot. Hermione and Grissil serve as conduits through which the patriarchal ruling line will continue; upon Mamilius's death Perdita serves as a similar conduit, allowing the bloodline, if not the name of her father, to continue.

Perdita, like the low-born Grissil, "smacks of something greater than herself," (4.4.158) even as a lowly shepherdess. Polixenes and Gwalter both notice airs of something greater in the young female characters. Like a young Grissil, Perdita is swept up by a young man far above her social station. Perdita, rather than being an example of the full Griselda story, represents Griselda in the first half of the tale. Additionally, and in keeping with the longer history of the Griselda story, the three characters underscore the social tensions between the roles of wife and mother.

Early Modern English audiences were keenly aware of certain "facts" about women: they were the property of the husband, witchcraft was a fact of life, and transitional points between patriarchally recognized stages of a woman's life were cause for suspicion (Karpinska 427-430). The transitional points this discussion is concerned with are virgins and pregnant women. Wives and mothers were and are socially accepted and understood roles for women; these roles could

conflict, but that is a discussion for later in this paper. Before women could be wives, they would (ideally) be virgins. Both Hermione and Grissil married as virgins and became wives; their virginity fails to come into question, but Hermione's chastity (which, in Early Modern England meant something closer to monogamy than the modern meaning of abstinence) comes into question, and Perdita presents a legitimate threat to the Patriarchy with her virginity.

Shakespeare inverts the plot of Dekker's *Patient Grissil* in *The Winter's Tale*; Hermione experiences Grissil's fall from her husband's grace and the loss of her children in the first half of the play, and Perdita represents a young, peasant Grissil who is about to be swept up by her prince. Inverting the plot leads to some problematic transition points in the narrative. The first is that of the pregnant Hermione. Marriage gave medieval and early modern women legal identities, thereby containing them in their husband's authority (Karpinska 438). Wives were safely subjugated by a single man by marriage, but pregnancy often gave rise to masculine anxieties, particularly anxiety about cuckolding (Karpinska 439). A pregnant woman is not precisely a mother yet (although Hermione certainly was a mother during her second pregnancy), and the infant developing within the uterus is completely and unequivocally outside of male control. Marc Breitenberg, in his essay "Anxious Masculinity: Sexual Jealousy in Early Modern England," examines in depth the fears men had of being cuckolded, and the lengths taken to ensure sexual control over women—particularly noblewomen. What makes pregnancy particularly frightening for early modern men, according to Breitenberg, is that, within a Lacanian binary model, the vagina is constructed as a place of "not knowing" (3). Given that model, a wife can be constructed in such a way that, while the vagina is a void of knowledge for husbands, the husband strictly controls the wife's sexuality, thus negating a majority of anxiety related to cuckolding. At the transitional point of pregnancy, however, the continuation of a

family line is developing in a space that is simultaneously origin and absence (e.g. “not knowing”), leaving ample room for doubts on the part of the husband and (presumably) father (Breitenberg 3). Leonte’s raging jealousy regarding his perceived cuckolding is not only taken from *Pandosto*; wealthy and noble audience members could easily have related to the anxiety—the concerns of pure bloodlines and the continuation of that pure bloodline were paramount. While Grissil in the second half of *Patient Grissil* is facing the same obstacles that a pregnant Hermione is in the first half of *The Winter’s Tale*, the threats inherent in Perdita’s virginity are similar to those in the first part of *Patient Grissil*. This crossing over of plots represents a chiasmus between texts; a structural mirror between the Griselda stories and *The Winter’s Tale*. Even Perdita’s name, which means ‘little lost one,’ may be a veiled reference to the nameless child taken from Griselda in earlier versions of the story.

Perdita, believing herself nothing more than a shepherd’s daughter, nevertheless falls in love with the Prince of Bohemia, Florizel. Polixenes is well aware of this, and takes Camillo to a sheep-shearing festival to see if Florizel is engaged in a mere fling, or if the connection may be more serious (4.2.25-50). A simple case of a prince sowing his wild oats is no threat to the continuation of a royal bloodline; a legitimate love connection is. As Monica Karpinska notes in her essay, “Early Modern Dramatizations of Virgins and Pregnant Women,” virgins are both otherworldly (and therefore objects of worship) and worldly in that they represent physical and sexual temptation to men (430, 433). Perdita is repeatedly associated with flowers and divine figures. Florizel describes the sheep shearing as a “meeting of the petty gods,/ And you the queen on’t” (4.4.4). Perdita, throughout the scene, peppers guests with flowers like a sane Ophelia, offering “rosemary and rue” (4.4.74) to the disguised Polixenes and Camillo, before correcting herself and offering them “hot lavender, mints, savory, marjoram,/ The marigold, that goes to

bed with the sun” (4.4.104-105). Once Perdita has bedecked her guests and her friends with flowers, she invokes Proserpine for her friend’s chastity (4.4.110-125). This direct invocation and all the flower imagery sets Perdita up as an object to be worshiped, but also prepares her to be sexualized and absorbed into the patriarchy (Karpinska 431).

The problem for Perdita (and Grissil) is where precisely they are about to be absorbed into the patriarchy. In Dekker’s play, Gwalter’s men all reject the idea of marrying a peasant woman, however beautiful she may be, during the course of Dekker’s “husband test” (Chettle et al. 11-13). Similarly, once Polixenes realizes that Florizel is performing a handfasting with a shepherd’s daughter before his eyes, Perdita transforms from “the prettiest low-born lass that ever ran on the green-sord” (4.4.156-57) into a “fresh piece/ Of excellent witchcraft” (4.4.422-23). Shakespeare boils down into a single, vicious monolog all the complaints Gwalter’s courtiers have about Grissil’s marriage and aims it directly at Perdita and Florizel:

Pol. Mark your Divorce, young sir,
Whom son I dare not call. Thou art too base
To be acknowledg’d. Thou, a scepter’s heir,
That thus affects a sheep-hook! Thou, old traitor,
I am sorry that by hanging thee I can
But shorten thy life one week. And thou fresh piece
Of excellent witchcraft, whom of force must know
The royal fool thou cop’st with—
I’ll have thy beauty scratch’d with briers and made
More homely than thy state. For thee, fond boy,
If I may ever know thou dost but sigh
That thou no more shall see this knack (as never
I mean thou shalt), we’ll bar thee from succession,
Not hold thee our blood, no, not our kin,
Farre than Deucalion off. Mark thou my words.
(4.4.417-431)

Polixenes’s brutal speech serves two functions here. First, it restarts *The Winter’s Tale* (and aligns cleanly with the events of Patient Grissil) again, as a king casts out a legitimate heir, foreshortening his own line and precluding (presumably, we have little information about the

state of Polixenes's wife) the chance of another heir. Second, this speech mirrors Gwalter's speech to Grissil, when he sends her and her children away:

Mar. You shall be witness of this open wrong.
I gave strait charge she should not touch these brats,
Yet has she tempted with lascivious tears
The heart of Furio: see, she dandles them.
Take that child from her. ...
Dare you thus contradict our strait command?
I shall do justice wrong to let thee breathe
For disobeying me...
Tempt me not, siren. Since you are so loving,
Hold you, take both your children. Get you gone.
(Chettle et. Al 55)

Gwalter throwing Grissil and her children out inverts and mirrors Polixenes separating Florizel and Perdita in a number of ways. First, the speech represents the splitting of a union, be it the marriage of Gwalter and Grissil, or the handfasting of Florizel and Perdita, or the separation of any of the parents and children in either play. All of that pain and guilt and loss that the women must be feeling are, in both these cases, put into the mouths of the most powerful male characters, because in the instances of breaking relationships and parental ties, the patriarchy is supposedly what suffers the most in the long term. Had Polixenes allowed Florizel to marry a shepherdess who was not secretly a Sicilian princess, then the Bohemian royal line would have been tainted. However, for Sicilia, Perdita and Florizel represent the best hope for the two royal lines to continue. Similarly, once Grissil is married to Gwalter, she represents the best hope for the continuation of the line.

It is easy to see how Shakespeare divided and split Grissil into Hermione and Perdita, but it is less easy to determine the influence of the leading male characters. McNeal, in his duplication and inversion of characters from "The Clerk's Tale" to *Pandosto*, aligns Walter with both Pandosto and Dorastus (454). Baldwin also aligns Walter with Pandosto and Dorastus

(206), and attempts to align Florizel with Mamilius, suggesting the restoration of both of Hermione's children to more closely mirror the Griselda stories (207). It is also important to note that none of the Walter figures in earlier Griselda stories have fathers. None of these configurations quite ring true, and the changing source material means that some of these comparisons are essentially being made via repeated—albeit inaccurate—narratives. Shakespeare's choices regarding Leontes and Florizel are too specific and well-developed to have come from an echo of "The Clerk's Tale" in *Pandosto*; neither character is a perfect match for Gwalter; however, more elements of Gwalter are present in Florizel than Leontes.

Assuming that Shakespeare's most immediate source is Dekker, the most striking difference between Gwalter and Leontes is the reasoning (or lack thereof) behind ostracizing Hermione and Grissil. Leontes drives himself into a jealous rage over what is best described as a catastrophic misconstruction of friendly hospitality; Hermione's attentions to Polixenes, their "whispering," "leaning cheek to cheek," and "laughter with a sigh" is easily explained as spending time with a guest, not committing adultery (1.2.284-295). Gwalter's reasoning for testing Grissil is more ephemeral than Leontes's fears of cuckoldry; he simply tells Furio that his "bosom burnt up with desires to try my Grissil's patience" (Chettle et. Al 28). Additionally, and unlike Leontes, who sincerely believes his own accusations until Hermione's death, at no point does Gwalter believe that Grissil is in any way wrong. Gwalter nearly breaks his charade on several occasions, notably during the first attempt to separate Grissil from her children. Gwalter expresses a wish to shed tears (Chettle et. Al 52), and later in the scene capitulates and returns the children to Grissil, because his heart aches at both the marital discord and the crying of the children (54). Even upon his repentance to Apollo's Oracle, Leontes fails to mention either of his

children; his focus is on the wrongs he has done to Camillo, Polixenes, and Hermione as opposed to the foreshortening of his line and abandonment of his children (3.2.154-172).

The reunion of the families in Dekker and Shakespeare is also handled significantly differently by Leontes and Gwalter. Gwalter consciously orchestrates the entire event, from recalling his twins to ensuring the presence of Grissil and her family (Chettle et. al 78-79, 82-87). Leontes, meanwhile, stumbles upon his daughter and her adoptive family through a combination of sheer coincidence and the machinations of Camillo (4.4.555-625, 5.1.177-230). Even the reunion with Hermione is orchestrated nearly exclusively by Paulina (5.3.1-155). Another striking difference in the reunion lies in the knowledge of the daughter when proposing marriage. Gwalter, having consciously removed the twins, never had any serious intention of going through with the marriage; its entire purpose has been to create a situation in which to reunite the family. In *The Winter's Tale*, however, Leontes is unaware of Perdita's true identity when Florizel requests Leontes's help in swaying Polixenes's opinion. Audiences are chilled when Leontes replies, "Would he [Polixenes] do so, I'd beg your precious mistress" (5.1.223). This response highlights an incestuous undertone and is delivered as a veiled threat. Seeing Perdita's beauty (and resemblance to Hermione), Leontes considers having Florizel killed or forcibly returned to Bohemia, leaving him free to marry Perdita. Lacking Walter's knowledge of the true identity of his "bride," Leontes's marriage to Perdita would have been incestuous, and possibly rapacious. Rather than being a signal of a forthcoming reunion, Leontes places *The Winter's Tale* on the cusp of a revenge tragedy by suggesting incest and a marriage to his daughter.

Leontes's complete lack of control over his own situation is in opposition to Gwalter's complete control over his own life. The main aspect in common between Gwalter and Leontes is

mistreating an innocent wife; the particulars of the mistreatments, the reasoning behind their actions and even the handling of the situations are significantly different. Gwalter follows a line of Walters in that he decides more or less out of the blue to test his wife and is then in complete control of the test. Leontes is far more similar to Pandosto, particularly in the fear of cuckoldry and the jealous rage that saps all rational thought from him. Leontes's reunion with Hermione in such an iconic manner, as well as the differences between his character and Gwalter's, points to *Pandosto* and *The Metamorphoses* as the most likely sources for his character. Leontes invokes many of the reactions in audiences that Walter invokes in various Griselda stories, but his dark aspects and tragic determinism demonstrate a lack of Walter's flexibility and forgiveness.

Baldwin, after aligning Walter with Dorastus as well as Pandosto, then proceeds to align Florizel with Mamilius, suggesting that both the children have been restored to Hermione (207). This assertion becomes problematic when the suggestion of marrying brother to sister casts an incestuous light over the play. It certainly is considered romantic in the modern sense to have both children restored, and it underscores the similarity between *Patient Grissil* and *The Winter's Tale* quite nicely. That being said, Florizel is a far closer parallel to Gwalter than to Mamilius. For Florizel to be analogous to Mamilius, a parent must have cast him out. Rather than being victimized by a parent, Florizel takes his agency into his own hands by declaring, "From my succession wipe me, father, I/ Am heir to my affection" (4.4.480-81). This action is similar to Gwalter insisting not only upon choosing a wife of his own, but of choosing a wife despite her class standing (Chettle et. Al 3-5). Florizel and Gwalter both take their agency upon themselves, and choose wives of whom society disapproves. Additionally, and again unlike Leontes (or Pandosto, for that matter), Florizel and Gwalter refuse to be separated from wives who are wholly willing to leave them when social disapproval threatens their positions. Perdita is ready to

turn away from Florizel upon discovery (4.4.448-450), and even throws an “I told you so” at Florizel, saying “How often have I told you t’would be thus!/ How often said my dignity would last/ But till t’were known” (4.4.474-76). Similarly, Grissil asks to be sent home as soon as Gwalter intimates that his subjects are disdainful of her birth (Chettle et. Al 31).

Florizel is clearly the closest parallel to Gwalter in *The Winter’s Tale*, and although his relationship with Perdita closely mirrors the wooing of Grissil, Florizel’s relationship with the clown and Autolycus mirrors Gwalter’s relationships with Laureo and Babulo. These relationships have no source in *Pandosto*, nor in any previous Griselda story we discussed, with the exception of Dekker’s *Patient Grissil*. Additionally, the parallels between Laureo and Babulo and the Clown are the closest connections seen in minor characters between *Patient Grissil* and *The Winter’s Tale*.

It is a rare occurrence in Shakespeare plays to have both a fool character and a clown character, and *The Winter’s Tale* has both. Autolycus, the streetwise cutpurse who used to serve Florizel, has no parallel in *Pandosto*, nor in any Griselda story. However, the Clown in *The Winter’s Tale*, who is Perdita’s adoptive brother, serves as an amalgamation of the *Patient Grissil* characters Laureo and Babulo. As I discussed in the previous chapter, neither Babulo or Laureo appears in any previous incarnation of the Griselda story, and Dekker casts them as stock characters from Commedia dell’arte in order to explain their presence in *Patient Grissil*. Shakespeare, also familiar with the conventions of Commedia dell’arte, took these two stock characters and combined them into one: the Clown. The clown is responsible (in partnership with Autolycus) for much of the Commedia dell’arte-based humor in Act IV. Laureo and Babulo’s roots come from Il Dottore and Arlecchio, and both of those character traits are embodied in the

clown, which is an unusual combination, particularly given the Clown and Autolycus's interactions.

The entirety of Act IV, scene iii is a scene reminiscent of Laureo and Babulo's first appearance in *Patient Grissil*, an encounter between Autolycus and the Clown; their interaction is a twist on a classic *lazzi*. Traditionally, the *lazzi* in question features Pantalone having a heart attack upon hearing bad news, and his servants must revive him ("Commedia" 9). Shakespeare takes this *lazzi* and turns it on its head. Rather than a Pantalone character having a heart attack, Autolycus writhes about on the ground, pretending to have been beaten and robbed (4.3.50-63). The Clown stumbles upon him and attempts to aid him; Autolycus in return picks the Clown's pocket (4.3.65-115). This scene showcases the Clown's Arlecchio roots; scene iv displays both his Arlecchio roots and his Dottore influences.

Once Florizel and Perdita are discovered by Polixenes and bundled off to Sicilia by Camillo, the Shepherd—Perdita's foster father—and the Clown discuss turning over evidence of Perdita's strange adoption circumstances to Polixenes to prevent his wrath from descending upon their heads (4.4.686-705). The Shepherd in this instance is not entirely willing to abandon his adopted daughter, but the Clown insists, particularly after Autolycus's description of Polixenes's punishments (4.4.776-798). The Clown here serves as the dissenting voice once again, although aimed at Perdita as opposed to Florizel (which would make for an identical parallel to *Patient Grissil*). This dissenting voice is not taken particularly seriously; however, its presence affirms a connection to Laureo as well as to Babulo. The similarities between these characters' functions and their functions in Dekker's *Patient Grissil*, as well as *Patient Grissil* being the first instance of these characters in a Griselda story suggests yet another strong connection between *Patient Grissil* and *The Winter's Tale*.

One of the strongest character parallels between *The Winter's Tale* and *Patient Grissil* is that of Paulina with Julia and Gwendhyan. Gwendhyan and Julia possess a striking amount of power for women in an Elizabethan play. Not even the lauded Rosalind (*As You Like It*) maintains as much power over the male characters in her play as Julia, Gwendhyan, and Paulina. Paulina maintains her power over Leontes in several ways, including maintaining control over Leontes's (and therefore her own) marital status and prospects, and by having no qualms about expressing herself to Leontes on any subject, even if he disagrees.

Dekker is not clear about how long Gwendhyan was a widow; however, even after her marriage to Sir Owen, Gwendhyan maintains control over her own life. Similarly, Paulina is clearly in control during her marriage to Antigonus, and even once she is widowed she continues to have control not only over her own life but Leontes's as well. The widow character is an addition that Dekker first makes to the Griselda story; no other version of *Patient Griselda* nor *Pandosto* has a widow character. The inclusion of Paulina as a widow character in the second half of *The Winter's Tale* suggests a strong connection with *Patient Grissil* specifically.

Gwendhyan, upon being propositioned by Sir Owen, tells him that "If her cousin Gwalter say, 'Gwendhyan, tage this Pritish knight' shall love hur diggon; but must have her good will, marg you" (Chettle et. Al 24). Gwendhyan is prepared to marry again, but only on the conditions that Gwalter order her to marry, and only if the man has her good will. This is exactly what Leontes orders Paulina to do at the close of *The Winter's Tale*; it is implied that Paulina and Camillo's relationship is based on mutual affection. Julia, Gwalter's sister, refuses marriage outright, under any terms (Chettle et. Al 26-27). Both Gwendhyan and Julia ought to be subject to Gwalter in terms of whom they marry, but in reality both have autonomy to choose either to marry or not. During her marriage, Paulina was not ruled either by Antigonus or Leontes. When Paulina

attempts to show Leontes his daughter, Leontes asks Antigonus, “What, canst not rule her?” (2.3.46), and both Paulina and Antigonus answer in the negative; Paulina declares that “he shall not rule me” (2.3.50), and Antigonus puts up a token argument before allowing Paulina to complete her mission (2.3.52-67). Paulina, like Gwenthyan, lacks patience.

Once Hermione has been carried from the courtroom upon her collapse at the news of the death of her son, Leontes repents his accusations in time for Paulina to burst in with the strongest language the audience has heard her use with Leontes,

What studied torments, tyrant, hast for me?
What wheels? Racks? Fires? What flaying? Boiling
In leads or oils? What old or newer tortures
Must I receive, whose every word deserves
To taste of thy most worst?
(3.2.175-179)

This speech, Paulina’s accusation of what, in her estimation, is Leontes’s worst crime, appears to be a lengthened and far more serious version of Gwenthyan’s accusations of Sir Owen when he brings freshly cut wands into the house,

Gwe. Do, and hur tare; do and hur tare. See you, now, what shall
hur do with wands? Peat Gwenthyan body, and mage Gwenthyan
put her finger in me hole? Ha! Ha! By God, by God, is scradge her
eyes out that tudge her, that tawg to her, that loog on her: marg you
that, Sir Owen.
(Chettle et. Al 46)

Gwenthyan’s suggestion of violence is played to the audience for laughs and Paulina’s for drama, but both practically dare men—who would be fully within their rights to carry out these actions—to physically assault them in order to demonstrate a power dynamic outside of the social norm of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Both of these speeches could have been given by Griselda were she not “patient,” and by giving Paulina a speech similar to Gwenthyan’s, Paulina also acts a meta-audience. She embodies the reactions of the audience,

forcing space between the audiences and their instinctive reactions. This space allows for critical analysis of the situation, as well as instinctive reactions.

Additionally, these speeches help to establish that Paulina and Gwendhyen are unafraid to challenge men, should they feel the situation calls for it. Once the precedent is established that Paulina can say nearly anything to Leontes with impunity, the leap to controlling Leontes is not far. By controlling Leontes (as the primary female figure and possible surrogate for a wife), Paulina keeps her own situation under her control. Her primary method of control over Leontes is in controlling his marital status. Like the courtiers, Paulina knows Leontes must eventually remarry to continue the bloodline, but by asking for the task of choosing Leontes's next wife (5.1.75-77) and having it granted, Paulina secures her own future.

Paulina is prepared to remain unwed after Hermione's reunion with Leontes (5.3.130-134), which makes her similar to Julia in many respects. Both are prepared to break with social convention and remain single at the close of the play. However, much like Gwendhyen, Paulina is willing to be "assigned" a husband, with the caveat that the match is more than convenience. As Paulina prepares to fade away and "wing me to some wither'd bough, and there/ My mate (that's never to be found again)/ Lament till I am lost" (5.3.133-135), Leontes twists Paulina's reference to Antigonus into a lament that she will never again find a mate. His remedy to this lamentation is that "[t]hou [Paulina] shouldst a husband take by my consent,/ As I by thine a wife... I'll not seek far/ (For him, I partly know his mind) to find thee/ An honorable husband. Come, Camillo,/ And take her by the hand" (5.3.136-37, 141-144). The implication here is that Camillo is a love match for Paulina, and this love match mirrors Gwendhyen's insistence on a husband whom she loves, rather than a politically or financially smart match.

These character parallels are in themselves a strong argument for Dekker as Shakespeare's most immediate source; there are, however, language and structural similarities that further strengthen the argument.

Assuming that an adaptation of the Griselda story would contain the word "patient" or other forms of the word frequently scattered through the text would make a certain amount of sense. Shakespeare however, uses "patient" sparingly and surgically. There is, in fact, a single instance of the word "patient" in the entirety of *The Winter's Tale* ("Shakespeare Concordance"); Hermione uses the word self-reflexively. After Leontes has cut off her access to Mamilius and sends her to prison, Hermione muses, "There's some ill planet reigns;/ I must be patient, till the heavens look/ With an aspect more favorable" (2.1.105-107). Because Leontes is more concerned about Hermione's chastity and constancy than her ability to weather hardship, this particular use of "patient" links Hermione with Griselda in general; audiences would have heard "patient" and connected Hermione to whatever version of the Griselda story they were most familiar with. In addition to this single instance of "patient," the only other form of the word that appears in *The Winter's Tale* is "patience," which appears a total of four times ("Shakespeare Concordance").

"Patience" is a word Shakespeare links to three characters: Time, Hermione and Paulina. Each character uses "patience" slightly differently, but each instance solidifies the connections between not only the Griselda folklore in general, but in two instances between *The Winter's Tale* and *Patient Grissil* specifically. In the case of Time, "patience" is part of a request. Time addresses the audience, saying "your patience this allowing,/ I turn my glass and give my scene such growing/ as you had slept between" (4.1.15-16). This time gap is significant for several reasons. First, no other Shakespeare play contains a sixteen-year gap in time. Every single

version of the Griselda story, on the other hand, has a similar time gap. As previously discussed, the lengths of these gaps differ, but Dekker specifically references a sixteen year gap between the removal of the children from Grissil and their reunion. That Shakespeare chose the exact length of time as Dekker for the gap in the plot is too close to be mere coincidence.

Additionally, Time's reference to an hourglass (4.1.15) is a visual representation of both the cyclical and reversible nature of time in both Shakespeare and Dekker. The hourglass signals that time in *The Winter's Tale* has turned both forward and back; forward in linear years, but back in terms of the progression of the traditional Griselda tale. On top of that, the reversible nature of an hourglass foreshadows the eventual reversal of death (Hermione's reanimation). Structurally, the hourglass represents the inversion of the plot between *Patient Grissil* and *The Winter's Tale*. The first half of *The Winter's Tale* mirrors the second half of *Patient Grissil*, and vice versa. The reference to "patience" in that monologue, however, is not only a reminder to the audience that there are elements of the Patient Griselda story in the text, but an invitation for the audience to invest their patience and participate in a different element of the Griselda story, embodied by Perdita and Florizel.

Hermione also speaks of patience, during her trial. This use reveals features of the Griselda story; however, it also functions to separate the final scene of *The Winter's Tale* from the ending of *Pandosto*. Hermione predicts that, "if pow'rs divine/ Behold our Human Actions (as they do),/ I doubt not then but innocence shall make/ False accusation blush and tyranny/ tremble at patience" (3.2.30-33). *Pandosto* ends with Pandosto committing suicide, and allowing Dorastus and Fawnia to continue their lives without the benefit of a reconciliation (Greene 84-85). By invoking not only "patience" here, but the triumph of patience over tyranny, Hermione foreshadows the eventual reunion of herself, her husband, and their daughter. This reunion is, as

we previously discussed, specific to the Griselda tales and is not present in *Pandosto*. Once again, such an oblique reference to the Griselda folklore reminds contemporary readers of just how popular the Griselda tales were; Shakespeare could reference just a single keyword and the audience would have immediately been on the same page.

The final two instances of “patience” come from the increasingly powerful Paulina. The first time Paulina uses “patience” is in discussion with Leontes, shortly after Hermione’s supposed death. Paulina goes perhaps a little too far too soon in remonstrating Leontes for the deaths of his wife and child, and says she will “speak of her no more, nor of your children;/ I’ll not remember you of my own lord,/ Who is lost too. Take your patience to you,/ And I’ll say nothing” (3.2.229-232). This use of “patience” is particularly interesting, because it can be read in two ways. First, it can be read as Paulina instructing Leontes to gather up his own inherent capacity to be patient, essentially as words of encouragement or soothing tones. This reading however, undermines Paulina’s authority with Leontes, and weakens her as a character. She has called out the king in a courtroom with extreme language over the death of his wife, and to apologize weakens her initial scolding remarks and her authority. The other way to interpret Paulina’s use of “patience” here is that she is instructing Leontes to take Hermione’s memory to him as his patience, thus paving the way for the agreement between Leontes and Paulina regarding future marriages. This reading reaffirms and grows Paulina’s power over Leontes, and elevates Paulina’s influence over Leontes to the same level as Gwenthyran and Julia’s influence over Sir Owen and Gwalter.

Paulina’s second use of “patience” is also the last time the word is used in the play; when Leontes and Perdita visit Paulina to see the statue of Hermione, Leontes is overcome with emotion and moves to kiss the statue (75-80). Exclamatory statements in Shakespeare are not

uncommon, and exclamations by one character to arrest the action of another character happen at least twice in *The Winter's Tale*. Specifically, when Polixenes intervenes in Perdita and Florizel's handfasting, he exclaims "Soft, swain, awhile, beseech you" (4.4.391). Paulina, on the other hand, stops Leontes with "O Patience!" (5.3.47), which is both an unusual exclamation for a character in this play, and yet another reminder that there are multiple sources influencing the scene.

The statue scene is most commonly remembered for its similarity to Pygmalion's story in *The Metamorphoses*, particularly among modern readers and audiences. Shakespeare, by changing Paulina's exclamation, abruptly reminds audiences that even here there are echoes of the Griselda story. We have already established that having the reunion at all breaks from *Pandosto*, but all the Griselda stories contain a reunion scene. The strongest connection here between *Patient Grissil* and *The Winter's Tale* is in the resurrection motif, and due to this motif, both plays may have been performed around Easter. What makes Shakespeare's reunion scene and Paulina most immediately reminiscent of Dekker is that Paulina is the vehicle through which the reunion comes about. In *Patient Grissil*, it is the children who are 'resurrected,' in *The Winter's Tale*, the wife. In this way, Paulina actually surpasses the control over the story that Julia and Gwenthyran command; without Paulina orchestrating the final scene of *The Winter's Tale*, the ending more logically sees a reunion between father and daughter, followed by the father's suicide than a family joyfully reunited for good. Paulina wields a striking amount of power throughout *The Winter's Tale*, and in no other source, barring *Patient Grissil*, is there a female character in such a specific position of power.

In terms of the structure of the plot, there are two significant events in *The Winter's Tale* which differ from every source except *Patient Grissil*: the reunion scene, and the structure for

separating mother and children. I have discussed the reunion scene above to this point; the final facet of the scene which structurally connects Shakespeare to Dekker is the purpose of the scene. For Ovid, the entire point of Pygmalion's statue is to represent the perfect womanhood (232); Paulina's statue cannot be equated in terms of beauty, since Polixenes and Leontes point out signs of age on statue-Hermione's face (5.2.27-29). Additionally, Pygmalion's statue coming to life is the genesis of an entirely new relationship, whereas Paulina's reviving Hermione rekindles an old relationship. The scene therefore is tonally and temporally much more similar to *Patient Grissil* than it is to "Pygmalion."

In *Patient Grissil*, Dekker initially allows Grissil to take her children with her when she is sent back home to Janiculo, and later Gwalter and Furio come to take the children away. This double removal is found in no other Griselda story, but Shakespeare takes this concept and doubles it; Mamilius and Perdita are both separated from Hermione twice. Mamilius is initially banned from his mother's presence by Leontes (2.1.55-57), which theoretically should have been an impermanent arrangement. Once Hermione's innocence was declared, she and Mamilius ought to have been reunited with no further trouble. The second separation with Mamilius, however, is upon his death: a permanent separation (3.2.144-42). Perdita's separation from Hermione mirrors the *Patient Grissil* double separation even more closely; Perdita is taken from Hermione almost immediately after her birth and taken to her father (2.1.33-70). Ideally, this separation should have resolved itself by Paulina returning Perdita to Hermione; however, the second separation comes close on the heels of the first for Hermione. Leontes, upon seeing Perdita, immediately wishes to burn her alive (2.3.140). Eventually, and due to protests by Antigonus and his other courtiers, Leontes orders Perdita cast out, left to die in the elements

(170-184). The significance and specificity of the change in the structure for removing the children strongly points to Dekker's *Patient Grissil* as an important source for *The Winter's Tale*.

Griselda after *The Winter's Tale*

Well before Shakespeare's influence, Patient Griselda was a commonly known character. Patient Griselda began as an ambiguous character in an equally ambiguous narrative. Eventually, however, the character morphed into a near-allegorical figure. Christine de Pizan elevated Griselda alongside Queen Hypsicratea and Empress Triara (145-170) as examples of women who made marriage a positive experience for their husbands, subverting moral standards of the time. John Phillips, on the other hand, uses Griselda in the context of allegorical figures such as Politick Persuasion to elevate her to the level of allegory. Griselda's status as an allegorical figure in Phillips's Griselda story, however, is perhaps unclear. Despite the presence of various allegorically named figures, Grissel retains her name. What her name represents, however, is a common early modern trope. Phillips's and Dekker's plays combine to solidify Griselda's position as a common trope, but once a trope becomes reified, it opens itself up to subversion.

The Patient Griselda trope is systematically taken apart by Shakespeare in *The Winter's Tale*. The essence of Shakespeare's deconstruction of the Patient Griselda trope rests in a reinjection of reality. Put simply, Shakespeare removes all artifice from the tests Leontes puts to Hermione. Walter's testing of Griselda is an act; each narrative from Boccaccio to Dekker specifies that Walter wishes to test Griselda based on some bizarre whim⁴. Additionally, when Walter has his children taken from Griselda, the separation is planned, and has a planned end. The very real death of Mamilius, despite Anna Baldwin's claims that Shakespeare suggests that Mamilius is restored through Florizel (207), provides a real-world consequence of Leontes's actions. These are consequences that Hermione is not able to weather, and she "dies" figuratively upon hearing of her son's death (3.2.147, 99-201). In addition to the death of the child, the presumed death of the wife, while clearly taken from Greene's *Pandosto*, also has repercussions

on the Patient Griselda trope. Griselda's suffering has much more of an emotional impact on the reader or audience when she is alive to suffer. Watching Leontes emotionally disintegrate over the death of his wife redirects the emotions of the audience; audiences are less likely to feel sorry for Leontes than they are for Hermione.

Perdita also embodies aspects of Patient Griselda, which Shakespeare also deconstructs. Griselda's marriage to Walter is nearly a fairy tale. A peasant girl is noticed and deemed worthy by a lord, and he sweeps her off her feet (Dekker 11, 13). Griselda knows nothing about her impending marriage until about five minutes before the ceremony. Perdita, on the other hand, has had an ongoing relationship with Florizel prior to the events of the play. Shakespeare also subverts expectations where Florizel and Perdita are concerned. When Polixenes discovers Perdita and Florizel's plans to marry, Perdita tells Florizel, "Beseech you/ Of your own state take care. This dream of mine/ Being now awake, I'll queen it no inch further,/ But milk my ewes and weep" (4.4.447-449). Perdita is giving Florizel a way out of their relationship, and she is willing to go quietly. Florizel, however, refuses to let Perdita leave (4.4.462-466). This is a far more realistic (particularly for modern audiences) representation of a relationship than either the fairy tale wedding, or Griselda's mute willingness to be tossed aside by her husband.

These are a few of many ways Shakespeare subverts and deconstructs the Patient Griselda trope. The logical question then, is "is the concept of the Patient Woman now as good as dead?" Certainly Shakespeare took advantage of Patient Griselda's status as a trope to question the assumptions underlying the trope. To say it is dead, however, is to underestimate the compelling nature of the Patient Griselda folklore.

Conclusion

In the eight hundred years the Patient Griselda narrative has existed as written texts, it has endured periods of huge popularity in popular culture, and periods of relative obscurity. Moving from Boccaccio to Petrarch and finally through the English literary tradition up through William Shakespeare, Patient Griselda went from a popular tale to trope status; the slightest reference to Griselda in a text would have been immediately understood by audiences and readers of the time.

The reason for telling a Patient Griselda story remained ambiguous from Boccaccio, who put his Griselda story in the mouth of a transgressive character, through Petrarch and Chaucer, who attempted to take a moral line, to Phillips's morality play, etc. Each version of the Griselda story has been told with a nod to a social or political current event upon which the author wished to comment. Christine de Pizan used the story in the defense of women, and Shakespeare—writing during and after the Elizabethan period—used it to place women in positions of social and political power. The story was produced and reproduced to reflect changes to the story over time; changes due to current events and past iterations of the tale.

Although the story was a popular culture staple for many years, literary critics have paid little attention to the Griselda stories over the years. Many critics who engaged with versions of the Griselda story focused on textual explications, or contextualizing the story in a given time period. Notable exceptions to this tradition are Anna Baldwin, E.A.J. Honigmann and Thomas H. McNeal, all of whom engaged with *The Winter's Tale* in order to pin down Shakespeare's Griselda source.

Baldwin, Honigmann and McNeal were primarily looking at "The Clerk's Tale" as Shakespeare's most immediate Griselda source, based on character similarities; however, given the specific changes Thomas Dekker made to the Griselda story in *Patient Grissil*, and their

similarities to characters and story structures in *The Winter's Tale*, the most compelling conclusion is that Shakespeare's most immediate source for the Patient Griselda story was Thomas Dekker's play.

Notes

1. Due to the changes in country, language and time period, the names of the characters change from version to version of the Griselda story. For example, Gualtieri (Boccaccio) becomes Gwalter (Dekker), Walter (Petrarch), Gautier (Phillips) and Griselda goes through similar changes, from Griselda (Boccaccio) to Griseldis (Petrarch), Grisilde (Chaucer), Grissill (Phillips) and Grissil (Dekker). In Chapter 1 of this paper, I will use the various iterations of character names interchangeably.
2. In Chapter 2, when discussing the corpus of the Griselda mythos, I will use “Griselda” or “Griselda story”. When I am discussing a character from a specific work, I will use the specific name of the character in that work.
3. Anna Baldwin and Tomas H. McNeal argue that Shakespeare and Robert Greene used Chaucer’s “The Clerk’s Tale” as their Griselda sources; thus Shakespeare is primarily supposed to be sourced by Chaucer, either directly or via Greene’s Chaucerian influences.
4. References to Walter desiring to test his wife: Boccaccio 402; Chaucer 449-453; Petrarch 411; de Pizan 160; Dekker 43
5. These sources are referenced in the “Chronology and Sources” section of *The Riverside Shakespeare* (see *The Riverside Shakespeare* in Works Cited).

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